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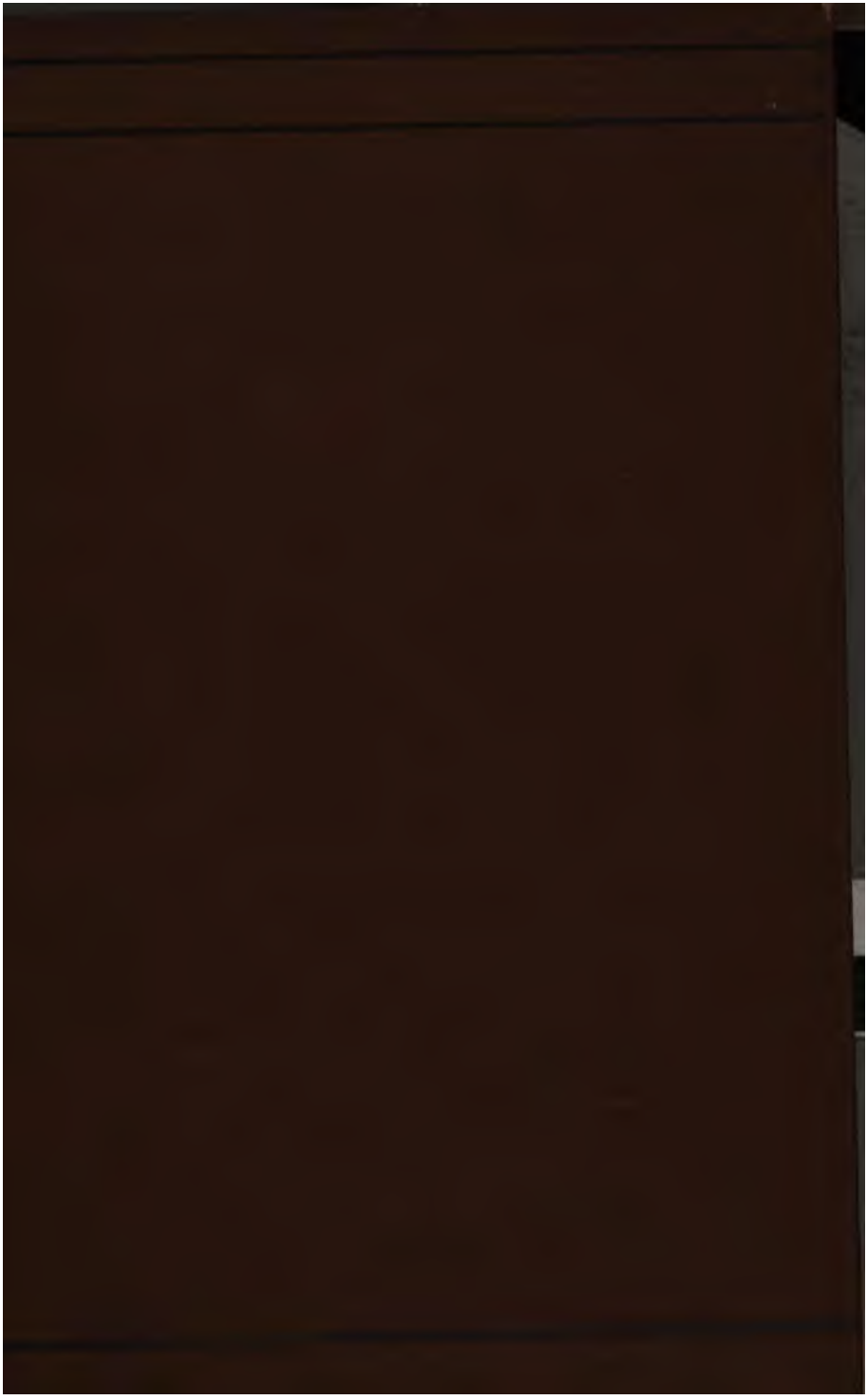

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY.

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PREFACE.

No attempt is here made to treat the subject of Christian Sociology exhaustively. It is rather the Author's aim to present it clearly, to urge its claims to careful study, to show its practical bearings, and to call on Christian scholars to aid in its further development. The field of thought here entered is rich but unexplored; and, perhaps, little more can now be done than to call attention to the wealth which the Christian thinker may appropriate. Instead of claiming to have perfected the system, the author rather regards the treatment as tentative, and is satisfied with the modest claim of giving elements, hints, principles, outlines, suggestive thoughts, and guide-boards for future explorers.

Whoever comprehends this subject will appreciate its freshness, and will realize that there is in it a creative energy calculated to inspire the mind with new thought and the heart with new emotions. But he will also appreciate the difficulty in the treatment,

since in the definition and arrangement no help can be gained from other books. The writer on Christian Sociology is a pioneer who finds no preparation for his work, but his mission is to prepare the way for others. But while the newness of the subject invests it with difficulty, it, at the same time, is a strong attraction to thoughtful, inquiring, original minds. This volume is not intended for those who are willing to walk only on beaten tracks; nor will it likely attract those who can use the materials of thought only after they have been fully developed and shaped by thinkers. But those who seek and ask and knock, who can venture into fields, green and flowery but untrodden, and who, as true artists, can form into symmetry and beauty fresh materials of thought, will find this subject (in whatever light they may regard the author's treatment of it) attractive, stimulating, and inspiring. To such it is commended for study, for deeper, broader, and more systematic development, and for practical application in daily life.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETY—ITS NEGLECT AND ITS IMPORTANCE.

A NEW subject may arrest the attention by its novelty and by the expectations it excites. There are modern Athenians who are anxious "either to tell or to hear some new thing." The inquisitive will come to the new theme to see whether it enlarges their range of thought, or gives a new standpoint from which to view familiar objects, or gives freshness to old truths. Those who are on the alert for the sensational will look for something that is startling ; while others will be thankful for any suggestive thought which gives fresh impulses and leads the mind out of its accustomed grooves into new channels.

But while a new subject has advantages, it may also have disadvantages. The very expectations excited may place the author at a disadvantage ; and his readers may fail to find the novelty, the freshness, and the originality they expected. A new subject does not necessarily make a fresh book. Then there are some who look with suspicion on everything that is new in literature or out of the usual order, anything which threatens to disturb them in their ease or lift them out of their ruts. There is an extreme conservatism, which meets with hostility whatever is new,

fearing that it may take the place of the old. Those who are under the dominion of this conservatism are so prejudiced that they cannot do justice to the new; while there are others who regard a new subject with an apathy that is worse than direct opposition. It is especially in theology that any seeming innovation is likely to encounter the most serious obstacles. As the religious interests are peculiarly important, they are apt to excite deep feeling and strong prejudice; hence new departures in theology generally meet with special opposition, lest they might interfere with these interests. Whoever leaves the beaten track can hardly expect to escape the charge of presumption. Whatever is new must pass through a severe ordeal before it can take its place by the side of that which is firmly established, and around which thoughts and feelings, and perhaps prejudices, have crystallized for ages. The old ways, like old wine, are regarded as the best, and a venerable antiquity is often a strong recommendation.

The subject of this volume is, indeed, new, but it has none of the advantages or disadvantages of that which is startling or sensational. No doubt the subject will meet with its full share of prejudice and opposition. It will receive most favour from minds which can enter with zest a region but little explored, and which by vigorous, original thinking can take crude materials and shape them into a rounded system. It will be sure to arrest the attention of those who realize that we are living in a transition period, that the Church is passing through a crisis, that important changes and new developments are imminent, and that the marshalling of new forces

into the service of the Church is as essential as the conservation of the old ones. There are, no doubt, some who will feel the importance of the subject, and who will enter on its study with deep interest. They will appreciate it as of vital interest, as an outgrowth of the times, and as calculated to meet a need of the age. To such persons it will be suggestive of fresh thought; it will give them new and broader views of old subjects, and will lead them into interesting regions but little known. And the subject is of sufficient living interest and importance to exert a stimulating influence on theological literature in general, even if the treatment of the subject is at first very defective.

It is, of course, not claimed that Christian society has not been studied in the past. In the New Testament, in theological works, and in sermons, it necessarily receives much attention. Especially in works on ethics are the social duties discussed, in some of them quite fully. But it seems that the subject of this volume has never been treated thoroughly and systematically. The author has frequently and deeply felt the need of a science giving an explanation of the nature, the relations, and the duties of Christian society. Books on this subject are greatly needed by the theologian, the preacher, and the intelligent Christian layman. But a searching investigation into theological literature, and inquiry among men familiar with this literature, have convinced him that no such book exists. Books were found which discuss social principles, and which discuss, from a Christian standpoint, important social problems. There are popular works and addresses on social duties, and on

various phases of social life. But there is no work on Christian Social Science.* In all his search, the author has never found the term "Christian Sociology," and it has, probably, never before been used in theology.

It is evident that this whole subject has been greatly neglected; and this must surprise every one who feels its importance. There are numerous works on Theology as the science of God, on Angelology, Soteriology, and Eschatology; but Christian Sociology, which deals so directly with our daily affairs and interests, has found no place in the systems of Christian science. Surprising as this neglect is, some of its reasons are obvious. There are inherent difficulties in the subject, which make the success of the effort to construct a Christian social science exceedingly doubtful. The subject is so vast, the number of objects embraced is so great, and these objects are so diverse, that the reduction of the whole to a complete system is, indeed, so difficult a task that one may well pause before venturing to attempt it. And ages of study and the efforts of many Christian scholars will be required before these difficulties can be overcome.

Another reason for this neglect is, the fact that theology has paid special attention to the doctrine of God and of man's relation to him, while it has paid com-

* "Christian Socialism," by A. Balou, is a different subject altogether. "The Church the Noblest Form of Social Life," by Jos. Angus, and "Social Morality," by F. D. Maurice, and similar works, treat of social subjects, but they do not form a Christian Social Science. "Principia, or Basis of Social Science," by R. J. Wright, is not a Christian Sociology, though it sustains a more intimate relation to theological science and to Christianity than most of the recent works on social science.

paratively little to man's relation to man. There were whole ages in which the leading minds of the Church devoted themselves to speculation on mysterious and insolvable problems, which at best had but a remote human interest, and whose consideration might safely have been left to a future state; but subjects of momentous importance and of practical interest were neglected. Often religion has been regarded as consisting too exclusively of the knowledge and worship of God, while its ethical elements have been neglected. Even now these elements are made less prominent than they deserve, and the Christian's relations to his fellow-men do not receive proper attention. Theology has not yet passed entirely beyond the Middle Ages; it has not altogether succeeded in breaking the chains forged for it by an intellectual but narrow scholasticism. Mint, anise, and cummin are still tithed, while the weightier matters of the law are neglected.

So rich is the system of Christian doctrines, that it is difficult to give each doctrine its proper place in the system, and to attach to it just the importance it deserves. The controversies and the peculiar tendencies and prejudices of an age generally give some doctrines undue prominence, while others of equal or even greater value are neglected. Hence the great difference in the prominence given to the various doctrines of Christianity in different ages. Unfortunately, the intrinsic excellence of a doctrine has not always been the measure of the importance attached to it. Sometimes a few doctrines absorbed the attention of the Church for ages; then others took their place and became the favourite themes of reflection. Thus in

the Christian centuries the Church has been growing into the great truths of the Gospel, one by one. But there has not yet been a period when Christian social science was the grand and absorbing theme of Christian study and reflection. But when its value is understood, and when its rich treasures of truth are unfolded, many will no doubt devote themselves to its study with real enthusiasm.

The day for this subject is coming; indeed, there are indications that it is already dawning. In all parts of the Church Christians recognize the fact that the social element of the Gospel has been too much ignored; and the very pressure on the Church from without makes them realize the need of developing and using their social power for promoting the cause of Christ. So patent is the lack of Christian sociability, that all thoughtful workers in the vineyard must keenly feel the need of a change. But this feeling alone will not bring about the needed reform; nor will occasional efforts to augment the social power of the Church produce the desired result. Deep and lasting convictions on this subject, growing out of the Word of God and the exigencies of the times, are needed. But even these can only prepare the way for the reform itself. The whole subject of Christian Sociology must be mastered, and its rich materials systematically arranged, before the solid and abiding results that are needed can be expected. The reform can only come when Christians understand their social relations to one another and to the world, and the social laws and duties which grow out of these relations. This knowledge is the condition for all intelligent Christian social activity. In other words, the

science of Christian Sociology must be formed, and its principles must be understood by believers, before we can expect from the Church the social influence demanded by the times.

Christianity is a mighty social power, and if left to work out its inherent nature it will establish Christian society. Every healthy believer feels the social energies working in himself, and if he follows their impulses he will seek the companionship of other believers. The formation of Christian society, therefore, does not depend on the understanding of the social power of Christianity, but on the working (whether consciously or unconsciously) of this power. But the Christian spirit does not merely want to feel blind impulses; it wants also to understand those impulses and wants to know itself; it wants to comprehend rationally what it possesses potentially and unconsciously. The developed Christian spirit wants to know as well as to feel and act, and it wants to know thoroughly and accurately, and even philosophically and scientifically. Christian faith and Christian knowledge are inseparable twins, which co-operate and which help each other.* The knowledge which is dearest to this spirit is, of course, concerning the things it values most; and for this reason it places so high an estimate on the study of Christian society. But the knowledge sought is not dead; it is on living themes, seized by the living spirit in a living way, and it is productive of living results. The

* It is a significant fact that John calls Christians those "that have known the truth." Many other passages in the New Testament indicate that a knowledge of the truth is a characteristic of Christians.

believing spirit uses its knowledge for the sake of promoting its own growth, and for the purpose of making itself more efficient in the service of God and man. Thus a knowledge of Christian society has for it a practical as well as a scientific value. This society is the product of Christ's influence on human hearts. In it, therefore, we see humanity, and also Christ and his Gospel. This, surely, makes it a subject of sufficient interest for profound study from a purely scientific point of view; but this interest is greatly enhanced by the practical tendencies of this study.

In America there is a peculiar demand for a Christian Sociology. Individualism is encouraged by the very theory of our government, and there is a strong tendency to lay more stress on the freedom of individuals than on their relation to one another. And yet, strange as it may seem, with all our theories of the freedom of individuals, demagogues frequently exert an influence which is destructive of all real personal freedom and of individuality. The laws that bind man to man are but little studied; and there is as much confusion respecting Christian liberty and responsibility, as there is respecting State and National sovereignty.

The age is intent on the development of the personality of the individual. This is one of the marked characteristics of the times, and with many this development amounts to a passion. Formerly the individual was lost in the government and in the Church, for whose welfare he seemed to exist. So greatly were the nature and aims of these organizations perverted, that the value of the personality was disregarded. Men, in fact, were not fully conscious of

their personality, their individuality, their selfhood, and they did not appreciate their personal dignity and worth independent of society. Especially was this the case during the Middle Ages. The government and the Church took the place of the individual ; the rights of persons were not properly respected ; often even the freedom of thought and conscience was ignored ; and, as a consequence, spiritual bondage, that worst form of slavery, prevailed. It seems strange to us now that Vladimir of Russia, called the Apostolic, should have *ordered* the inhabitants of Kiev, at the close of the tenth century, to assemble on the bank of the Dnieper to be baptized ; but similar cases of promoting spiritual ends by means of commands and force are very numerous. The princes or the Church commanded, and the people obeyed.

In the Reformation of the sixteenth century a revolution in thought began which is still at work, and which has given to the modern world some of its most striking features. At that time the claims of the individual were asserted in opposition to organized tyranny. It was a mighty, and at times even a violent assertion of the rights of the spirit. Prominent especially were the idea of personal freedom, the right of private judgment, the sacredness and inviolability of conscience, individual responsibility, and the doctrine that every believer, and not merely the Church as a whole, has the Holy Spirit. The assertion and the exercise of the rights and privileges of the individual were regarded by the reformers as a duty imposed on them by their own manhood as well as by God. The emancipation which followed the assertion of the rights of the person, led to some excesses already in

the sixteenth century; and since that time the principles of the Reformation have frequently been applied and developed in a one-sided manner, so that the individual was viewed as if he had all the rights, and society none. The family, the Church, government, and society in general, have repeatedly suffered from this excessive individualism. But this was an extreme, brought about by a reaction against the opposite extreme.

However, in spite of these excesses of individuals, the assertion of individual freedom and of all the rights of the personality was essential to the organization of the highest form of society. Only when men are fully conscious of themselves, and make a personal appropriation of the truth to themselves—not leaving it to the Church or to priests to do it for them—can the most valuable members of society be found and the highest society formed. Men who are not conscious of themselves, and who let others attempt or pretend to do for them what they ought to do for themselves, may be united externally or mechanically into social unions; they may be formed into what is called a Church or State. But societies thus formed are not free; they are not a spiritual union, whose bonds are inner, vital, spiritual; they are one, as a house whose stones are externally cemented is one, but not as a tree is one; the members are not fully themselves and do not control themselves, but are controlled by a force external to them; they do not really constitute the Church or the government, but are subject to the Church and the government, and they do not so much make society by their free personality, as society makes them.

So long as this kind of society prevailed a Christian Sociology was neither demanded nor possible. It can only be formed after man's personality has been asserted, and after his individuality has been developed. This has been done now for ages, and is still being done. So intent have men been in asserting their freedom, that they have often forgotten the bonds that unite them to their fellow-men. Even now there are evidences that, in the extreme desire to assert the individuality, there is a disintegrating process in society. But the aggregating process is also active; and during this century the organizing powers of Christianity have worked vigorously and have produced marked results. When men who have been freed and who are conscious of their rights come together, the product cannot be mechanical society. Free, spiritual, Christian men need no coercion to unite them; but they are drawn together by the same truth, the same spirit, the same faith, the same love, and the same hope; and thus they form a compact inner union in the same Saviour. They maintain their freedom, their individuality, and their personality, and thereby (not in spite thereof) form the best and truest society. Where the idea of this society prevails, a Christian Sociology is possible; and the fact that this idea does prevail, to some extent at least, is evidence that the day for the construction of a Christian Sociology has come.

If it is asked, Why make a distinct department of Christian Sociology, instead of including it in dogmatics and ethics? we answer, Because it really forms a distinct subject, and is of such magnitude and transcendent importance that it is worthy of separate

treatment. As it contains both doctrinal and ethical elements, it would not be proper to assign it either to dogmatics or to ethics. Besides, if it is included in some other subject, of which it is made merely a part, it will receive neither the attention nor the exhaustive treatment it deserves. But by making it a special department of Christian science it will be brought more distinctly before the mind, will receive a more complete development, and will be made more prominent than would otherwise be the case.

As our subject has been so much neglected, it is not surprising that the stress laid by the New Testament on the Christian's sociological relations and duties has not been fully appreciated. The teachings of Christ and the Apostles on this subject have, indeed, been commented on ; but they have not been formed into a system, as they deserve to be, and hence have not received due prominence. When the attention has been directed to this subject, and when its importance is felt, it will be found that the Word of God contains mines of wealth for sociology which have as yet been very imperfectly worked.

Whatever the believer may be in the next world, it is evident that in this life his religion is to attest itself mainly in his relations to his fellow-men. The knowledge and worship of God are, indeed, the roots of religion ; but from these roots are to grow plants whose blossoms and fruit beautify the world and bless mankind. Christ makes the second great commandment of the law like unto the first, thus making love to man as essential a law for the Christian life as love to God. These two commandments are inseparable ; so that he who truly loves God with all his heart must

also love God's children, and he who loves his children must love God also. This thought runs through all the Gospels and Epistles, and it is the essence of Christ's law as well as of the law of Moses.

The Christian who grasps this truth of Christ, that love to man is as essential to Christian character as love to God, must appreciate the importance of studying his relations to his fellow-men; for the duty of love to man can be performed only when the social relations, out of which these duties grow, are understood.

Our age makes an emphatic protest against the divorce of morality from religion. Never before has the science of Christian ethics received the best attention of so many profound scholars. The Church and the world feel that the religion which does not sanctify the heart and give light to others is false—that it is mere superstition or hypocrisy. The day is gone by when merely to immure one's self in a cloister or to mortify the flesh, passes for healthy piety. The religion which does not form a divine character and a divine life is justly regarded as a counterfeit. There is, in fact, a tendency to treat religion as purely ethical, to the neglect of the doctrinal elements; but this is merely a reaction against the neglect of the ethical elements of Christianity in the past. In some cases the ethical tendency of the day may promote a species of morality whose roots are not struck in spirituality, as was the case with the vulgar German rationalism. But it is hoped that, as a rule, this tendency will give the moral element of the Gospel its proper place, without ignoring the purely spiritual, and that thus it will promote a harmonious and a healthy religion.

The increased importance attached to the character and life in the Christian world is a favourable sign. These are greatly needed now as arguments for the divinity of our religion, especially in the contest with those who have no faith in the Christian doctrines. Christian Sociology wants to develop and utilize the Christian's power in society to the utmost ; hence it meets the ethical need and demand of the age. Indeed, the very tendency of religion in this age, unless the divine indications in it are thwarted, will create a Christian Sociology.

We speak of worship in the Lord's house as divine service, just as if no other service were divine. Yet a large part of the service of God consists in doing his will toward our fellow-men. To love in heart and in deed his children, is as truly divine service as worship in the sanctuary. With Christ the service of God consisted in ministering unto man and redeeming him from the thraldom of sin. And he who follows Christ surely cannot make a mistake as to the sphere in which his divine service is to be exerted. Prayer and praise, and meditation on the being and perfections of God, must neither be neglected nor made secondary ; but these are no more the whole of religion than the roots are the whole tree. The true worship of God prepares for the service of our fellow-men ; and serving them prepares for the proper worship of God. The two can no more be separated than can living faith and works. God and his children are so intimately related, that our relation to the one also determines that to the other, and what we do to one determines our conduct toward the other. Those who cheat man and give to churches, and brigands who

devote part of their booty to the Virgin Mary, serve God not a whit better than they do their victims.

While man's relation to man is, in general, evident, his relation to God is not so evident, and in many respects it cannot be fully understood. Many divine things we know only in part, and we see them "through a glass darkly." God does not demand of us a perfect knowledge of himself, and of our relation to him. He requires us to worship him in spirit and in truth; but we cannot improve his condition. He is fulness, we are emptiness; from him, through him, and unto him are all things. We are entirely dependent on him, not he on us. We cannot, therefore, bless and serve him as we can our fellow-men. The service which he requires of us is similar to that which he himself performs—to minister unto man. This is doing his work; this is truly serving him; this is making him truly our Lord, whose bidding we do. Jesus teaches us that what we do unto his disciples we do unto him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25 : 40.) And in the 45th verse he says: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." What we do unto his own, we do unto God himself. This is clearly taught in Heb. 6 : 10, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." The Christian duty to bless others is generally recognized by believers; but that blessing man is serving God, and is a very large part of our duty to God, is not properly appreciated. And yet this is both law and gospel. And

how could it be otherwise? God has made us members of the human family, and has so interwoven our destinies that we are inseparably connected. And it is reasonable that the faithfulness of Christ's disciples should be tested chiefly by the manner in which their love to God is reflected in their active love for their fellow-men.

Now, in order that the Christian may perform this divine service for his fellow-men, he must understand the principles of Christian Sociology. With the best intentions, his efforts will be comparatively ineffective, unless they are directed by a knowledge of the Christian's social ties and social requirements.

While the need of a Christian social science is evident, there are many special reasons for the study of this subject at the present time. Social problems are constantly arising which should receive their solution from a Christian standpoint. Many of these problems are of vast importance, and present an inviting field for the application of the principles of the Gospel—an application that is much needed, and which promises to be fruitful of rich results. Why leave the most important civil and social questions of the day to the solutions of a worldly philosophy and of a godless political economy? Why not make the ethics of the New Testament the test of all social theories? The problems connected with education, with capital and labour, with the relations of employer and employé, problems connected with politics, and with the various social relations and social life—all should be discussed by Christians in the light of the Gospel, and should be settled according to its spirit. This is essential to social welfare. That this is really the

case is recognized by Guizot,* who claims that social perfection can be attained only by means of Christianity. "It is clear that humanity can realize the idea of social perfection only as a rational society, by the union and brotherhood of the human family, and the harmony of all individuals with the divine reason. . . . . Certain it is, that it (social perfection) can never be brought about by any mere political institutions, by checks and counterchecks of interest, by any-balance of international powers. Only Christianity can effect this universal brotherhood of nations, and bind the human family together in a rational, that is, a free moral society."

There are, of course, many social questions to which no direct answer is given in the New Testament. But the principles according to which they are to be answered are found there; and it is the duty of Christians to apply these principles to the questions that agitate society. There is need now of work similar to that of the prophets. Under divine guidance they took the law and applied it to the ages in which they lived. They were the representatives and an embodiment of the theocratic idea, that God is the Supreme Ruler and that his will is the law of the nation. They, accordingly, applied God's will to the social affairs of life, as well as to the worship of Jehovah. And there is need now of Christian prophets, to apply the general principles of the Gospel to the living social questions of the day. The preacher who does this is the preacher who reads aright the signs of the times, and who, in applying the truth of life to living themes, is always fresh in the pulpit.

* "History of Civilization," I. p. 31, note.

Of the many pernicious tendencies for the correction of which a Christian social science is needed, there are two which are worthy of special notice, and which have received much attention, especially in Europe. They are opposite extremes. The one is an extreme individualism, the other an extreme socialism.* The former seeks only the elevation of the individual, and does this either at the expense of society, or else by ignoring it altogether. This individualism is the very essence of selfishness, and may easily become anti-social. Were all men controlled by this spirit, then society in an exalted sense would be impossible. Society is based on the idea of mutual concessions and help. And whatever advantages the individual may derive from society, he must be ready to give and to sacrifice, as well as to take. Individualism makes the members of society leeches which fatten on one another.

Individualism has appeared in various forms in our own and in other lands. It is the inspiration of the selfish theories in morals and in politics. It is seen in sectionalism, and in all movements that seek solely the interests of a class. In religion, the same spirit is seen in exclusiveness and in sectarianism, as well as in the tendency to depreciate the importance of social worship and of the social power of Christianity. Wherever self-interest is the sole motive, there this

* Guizot, "History of Civilization," I. p. 30, states the subject of dispute between these two extremes thus: "Is society formed for the individual, or the individual for society? Upon the reply to this question depends our knowledge of whether the destiny of man is purely social, whether society exhausts and absorbs the entire man, or whether he bears within him something foreign, something superior to his existence in this world."

spirit rules. And since selfishness is the root of all sin, this pernicious individualism, in some form or other, is very general.

Diametrically opposed to this tendency is that socialism which regards society as the sole object to be promoted. The individual loses his importance as an individual, and is regarded as having value only so far as he helps to make and promote society. Instead of having intrinsic value and being an end in himself, a man is regarded as being merely the means for the attainment of an end—namely, society.*

This spirit is seen in all the tendencies which lose the individual in society. Social Pantheism, for instance, makes the social All the object for which the individual exists, and necessarily destroys the significance of the person as an individual. All social tyrannies, as those of fashion, of etiquette, of custom, ignore individual peculiarities and rights, and aim at the reduction of all to a monotonous social level. In politics and religion this spirit prevails in those efforts of centralization which ignore the rights of individuals. It is seen in the tyranny of majorities over minorities. In some forms of modern communism the socialistic spirit has displayed the most diabolical character. In religion, socialism has reached its climax in the Roman hierarchy, which makes the Church so supreme that the individual must yield implicitly to its commands. Even the conscience of the individual

* The Danish theologian, Martensen, gives an interesting discussion of Socialism and Individualism in his work on "Christian Ethics." He regards Plato's "Republic" as an embodiment of Socialism, and Vinet and the Dane, Kierkegaard, as representatives of Individualism.

must yield to that of the Church. The Church decides what he is to believe, and to its spirit he must bow his spirit. But while Romanism thus represents a false socialism, various forms of Protestantism have fostered a pernicious individualism which ignores the claims of the Church.

A true Christian sociology overcomes these extremes. It recognizes the fact that the individual has worth in himself, independent of his relation to society. There is intrinsic value in the man himself, which cannot be estimated by his social importance. He has no right, therefore, to lose himself in society. "Human societies are born, live, and die upon the earth; there they accomplish their destinies. But they contain not the whole man. After his engagement to society, there still remains in him the more noble part of his nature—those high faculties by which he elevates himself to God, to a future life, and to the unknown blessings of an invisible world. We, individuals, each with a separate and distinct existence, with an identical person, we, truly beings endowed with immortality, we have a higher destiny than that of states." *

This worth of individuals Christian Sociology must recognize. But it must not ignore the just claims of society. It must promote that individualism which is promotive of the highest socialism, and that socialism which is promotive of the noblest individualism. It must maintain the significance of the individual, as well as of society, and must show their true relation to each other. The Gospel gives to each the right place. It seeks to advance society by the establishment and

* De Royar Collard, in Guizot, I. p. 30.

development of the kingdom of God. But it does not do this at the expense of the individual. The Gospel promotes society by promoting the welfare of the individual, and the welfare of the individual by promoting that of society. Thus, instead of being antagonistic, their interests are mutual, and they mutually benefit each other.

Individualism says that society is but a boat, and the individual is the passenger. The boat exists for the passenger, and has value only for his sake. Socialism says that society is the sea ; individuals are the waves that rise and fall on its surface. The waves appear and disappear, but the sea remains. Individuals come and go, but society continues, and in it the individual is lost. Christian Sociology regards these figures as defective, and says that society is a body, of which the individuals are the members. The members are as essential to the perfection of the body, as the body is essential to the health and vigour and efficiency of the members. There is no body without members ; there are no members without a body.

The above reasons, and similar ones which will occur to the thoughtful, make the need of a Christian Sociology and the importance of its study evident. System in the arrangement of sociological truth is necessary to satisfy the mind ; but it is still more important to enable the Christian to understand his mission in society and to use his social power to the best advantage. A properly developed social science may become an auxiliary of inestimable value to the earnest Christian minister and layman.

Sceptics feel that the time has come for the development of sociology on purely natural principles, and

numerous works on the subject have appeared in France, England, and Germany, some of which have been reproduced in America. It is incumbent on Christian theologians to put Christian Sociology by the side of the sceptical, and make evident, from the striking contrast, the superiority of the former over the latter, of the spiritual over the physical sociology. As far as the Evangelical churches are concerned, the time seems favourable for the development of our subject. The various denominations understand one another better than formerly. There is a tendency to bring Christians of different names into more intimate fraternal relations, even if it does not unite them into one denomination. Many believers now appreciate the fact that there is more to unite them to brethren in Christ than to separate them from them simply because they are in other denominations. And whereas formerly the stress was laid on that which separates the denominations, now the stress is also laid on that which unites them. This fraternal spirit not only makes a Christian social science desirable, but also possible. At a period when the different churches repel one another, the attempt to form such a science would, probably, result in forming a denominational sociology. But even if a Christian Sociology could be formed at such a time, the sectarian spirit would fail to appreciate it, and thus it would fail to accomplish its aim. But now there seem to be the most favourable conditions for its construction, as well as for its appreciation.

Since, then, the demands for Christian Sociology are so pressing, and since the conditions for its production and appreciation are so favourable, we are justified

in cherishing the belief that the time for it has fully come. And the tendencies indicate that, at no very distant day, all that God has said, and all that is great and imperishable of what man has written, will be concentrated on human society, to reveal the nature of that society and the laws for its government. The era for the rights of individuals has come, and has already made some progress. It has taken ages of agony and struggle to push the individual up to his present nearness to the summit for which he was made. Even while writhing under the heel of oppression, his instinct was a prophecy of the sublime height for which he was destined. From the summit already attained God will not hurl the individual, and no tyrant can. The work to be done now is, to bring every individual on this summit. A grand mission! But in connection with this there is another work which is no less important, is yet more difficult, and is now more neglected. That work is, the proper organization of free individuals into society; the adjustment of rights, so that the freedom of the individual may not interfere with the freedom and progress of society, but may promote them. The co-ordination of individuals must go hand in hand with their personal development. The summits which individuals attain must not be isolated, but they must form a solid chain of mountains which cannot be broken—each summit being distinct and individual, and yet connected with all the rest; each necessary to complete and strengthen the range, and the whole range in turn strengthening each summit.

But it must not be supposed that Christian Sociology can at once spring into being in all the symmetry

and beauty and perfection of which it is capable. It may take ages to give it even tolerable completeness. First of all, it will be necessary to direct attention to the subject and awaken an interest in it. Perhaps nothing more can be done now than to put up the scaffolding, on which future labourers shall stand in erecting a far more perfect structure than can now be reared. When that more perfect structure is erected, then the scaffolding may be removed as useless. But for the erection of the building it is indispensable. If not permitted to work on the building itself, the author will regard it a great privilege to be permitted to help in putting up the scaffolding.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY.—RELATION TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THEOLOGY.—METHOD.

Definition.

THE proper development of a subject is its best definition. Indeed, every definition which comes short of such a development is imperfect and unsatisfactory. To say that theology is "the science of God and divine things," may pass for a definition. But God and divine things are to be explained by this science; and until that is done, these very terms are a mystery; if, however, they are already understood and need no further explanation, then a science of them is no longer necessary. So the Gospel may be defined as the account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. But who can understand this definition, unless he already knows what is meant by that life and those teachings? The Gospel itself is, in fact, the only full and satisfactory answer to the question, What is the Gospel?

The same is true of Christian Sociology. The development of the subject, the entire system, is its best definition. And only when the system has been fully constructed can the term Christian Sociology be fully understood. The aim of the entire discussion which

follows is, therefore, to define the subject. And as the subject itself is developed in future ages, will the ideas associated with it be broader and deeper, richer and fuller.

But while a full development of a subject is its only exhaustive definition, a general definition is, nevertheless, possible and essential at the very beginning. It will give some idea of the scope and the limitations of the subject, of its relation to other departments of thought, and of the aim of the discussion; and it will also promote a better understanding of the system in the process of its development. Such a definition of our subject is the more necessary, because the word sociology is so frequently used in a vague sense, or in a sense so materialistic as to unfit it for the designation of a department of Christian theology. The French philosopher August Comte introduced the word Sociology into literature. He invented it to designate what he terms Social Physics.* As he aims in his "Positive Philosophy" to supersede all theology and metaphysics, he has no room for the spiritual. The father of Positivism wants no God to influence society, but only natural law, just as in the natural sciences.† He regards man as merely a part of

* "Sociology, which is the term I may be allowed to invent to designate Social Physics." (Comte's "Positive Philosophy," translated by H. Martineau, p. 444.)

† "The philosophical principle of the science being that social phenomena are subject to natural laws, admitting of rational prevision, we have to ascertain what is the precise subject, and what the peculiar character of those laws." (P. 457.) "Banished for ever from all other classes of speculation, in principle at least, the old philosophies now prevail in social science alone; and it is from this domain that they have to be excluded, by the

nature, and sociology, accordingly, as a part of physics. Comte, in fact, uses sociology, social science, and social physics, as synonymous terms.

Those who belong to the school of Comte use sociology in a similar sense. But some who reject the Positive Philosophy nevertheless deny, or at least ignore, the existence of God and the spiritual element in man, so that their sociology is also a department of natural science.

It is evident that, in adopting the term, we do not use it in the sense attached to it by its inventor and his school, nor in the sense in which it is used by Herbert Spencer. If it were so used, the qualifying term *Christian* would be altogether irrelevant. The use of that adjective implies that sociology is not treated here as a natural science, but as a part of theology.

The use made of this word by Positivists and others has attached to it a materialistic sense. This seems to have brought it into disrepute among theologians, so that they have avoided it. Now the word is largely confined to systems and writers which are hostile, or at least indifferent, to Christianity. But it is too good to be abandoned to infidelity. Christian theology can afford to appropriate and assimilate all that is true and good, wherever it may be found; and by adopting sociology, theology will enlarge its own domain, and will, at the same time, infuse a new spirit into social science.

conception of the social movement being subject to invariable natural laws, instead of to any will whatever." (P. 465.) The invariable natural laws produce all phenomena whatever; and the idea that Providence has anything to do with society is not thought worthy of consideration even. (P. 469.)

The sense in which Comte uses sociology does not necessarily belong to the word. The meaning attached to it depends altogether on the view taken of man and society. Whoever regards man as matter only, and society as nothing but a natural product, must, of course, regard sociology as a natural science, as much so as geology or chemistry. But if it is admitted that there is a spiritual element in man, and that there are other than natural forces at work in society, then sociology cannot be regarded as a part of physics. The meaning attached to the word, therefore, depends entirely on the view taken of man. The materialistic view makes it a natural science ; while the Christian makes sociology in its highest sense, or Christian Sociology, a theological science.

Those whose idea of science is taken wholly from mathematics, will of course deny that there can be a Christian Sociology. They want to admit into science only that which is subject to unalterable laws, which laws can be understood in their origin and working ; and which, when understood, will enable us to determine beforehand just what results will be produced. It may, therefore, be claimed by some that if sociology is truly a science, it will give us the power of prevision.* But what system of sociology

* " We have to comtemplate social phenomena as susceptible of prevision, like all other classes, within the limits of exactness compatible with their higher complexity." " Thus, we may concentrate the conditions of the spirit of positive social philosophy on this one great attribute of scientific prevision." (Comte, p. 456.) He claims that " if social events were always exposed to disturbance by the accidental intervention of the legislator, human or divine, no scientific prevision of them would be possible." He also says : " Events ordered by a supernatural will

has given such power of prevision to any great extent? And if this is to be the test of the science, then the materialist, as well as the Christian, must despair of ever producing a social science. There are so many contingencies; so many things to be taken into the account; so many things which are very imperfectly understood; and so many which may be co-ordinated in myriad ways, that in human affairs prevision can, at best, be only very general and very uncertain. Prevision is possible only if all the laws are known, as well as the exact manner of their working. If, then, God were fully understood, and his working, and if man were fully understood, then there might be prevision in Christian Sociology; and then, too, the conditions of prevision in any science would be fully met. But the materialist can no more understand all the laws of matter, than the Christian can all the laws according to which God acts; hence his sociology can no more give scientific prevision than can that of the Christian. We cannot see, therefore, what is to be gained by excluding God from social science, as far as prevision is concerned. On the same ground, all free will would have to be excluded. The recognition of a God does not introduce chance, or "accidental intervention," or arbitrary will, into social science, but only a factor already working in the laws of

may leave room for a supposition of revelation; but the very thought of prevision in that case is sacrilegious." "The old conceptions may evidently be applied to explain opposite facts equally well; and they can never afford the slightest indication of those which are yet future." (P. 456.) Comte's notions of God must have been very crude, otherwise he would not speak of Divine acts as "accidental intervention."

nature and back of them, whether seen there by natural science or not.

The aim of science, however, is not prevision, but to explain and to systematize. This is true of all the natural sciences. Some of them may admit of some prevision, as astronomy, simply because the laws are so perfectly understood in their mathematical operations. Were the laws of society equally well understood, then the future of society might be foreseen. But as it is, both the materialist and the Christian will have to be satisfied with probabilities. As sociology develops, its power of prevision may increase; but it can never attain the definiteness of a mathematical science, simply because its factors are not numbers. Here the highest wisdom begins with an appreciation of the limitations of our knowledge.

In its broadest etymological sense, sociology* is a discourse on society, or the science of society. As the science of society, it must give a rational explanation of society—that is, it must give and explain the nature, the principles, and the laws of human association. In the strict sense, therefore, sociology is the philosophy of human association, and embraces everything that pertains to man as a social being. While it includes all of man as social, it includes nothing else concerning man. It should be limited strictly to man in his associated capacity. Anatomy, biology, anthropology, and other sciences may have an important bearing on sociology, and may prepare the way for it, but they cannot be regarded as a part of it. There can be no social science, unless man is understood as

* The word is a compound of the Latin *socius*, a partner, an associate, and the Greek word λογος, discourse.

an individual; but it does not treat of man at all, except so far as he is social and sustains social relations. A complete social science would have to give all the laws of all human associations, a task of great magnitude and exceedingly difficult.

One of the greatest needs in social science is clear and exact definition. It should be stated definitely what is meant by the science, what it includes, what it excludes, and what its aim is. Now social science is frequently used in so general and vague a sense as to make it almost impossible to get a clear idea of what is meant by it. Different writers use it in different senses, thus leading inevitably to confusion. But besides this vagueness, there is another difficulty in the treatment of social science. It is frequently treated as if it were an art rather than a science; as if the aim of its discussion were solely for the purpose of getting practical rules for life. Sociology may, indeed, be very practical, but its first aim is rather knowledge than practice. It wants, first of all, to explain society, to give a science of it; when this is done, it wants to draw from the nature of society practical rules for life. That is, sociology must, *first of all*, be made a science, and *then* an art. Only when society is understood can correct and safe rules for its government be drawn. If the process is reversed, it will be unnatural and necessarily superficial.

Sociology, as the science of society or the science of human associations, excludes all that man is merely as an individual; it also excludes his merely individual relation to God and to nature. In other words, this science views man only so far as he is a member of society and sustains social relations. Its aim is to

give the reasons for human associations, and thus to give a rational explanation of human society.

As sociology gives the laws of all human association, it is very comprehensive and is capable of many subdivisions. The family, the Church, and the State, are three comprehensive subdivisions, each of which may again be subdivided. Society may be divided according to its nature or aims ; as religious, political, educational, commercial, friendly, consanguineous associations. But whether it attempts to give a complete analysis of society or not, sociology must explain society, giving the principles and laws and aims of human association.

Taken in a less strictly scientific sense, sociology may be treated historically. Its aim, then, is to show how society originated, and developed, and attained its present status. If sociology is treated politically, its aim will be to indicate the relation of government to society. If treated as a part of philosophical ethics, its aim will be to show what reason teaches that society ought to be. But the proper treatment of sociology is that indicated above—namely, as the science of society. To treat it as if synonymous with political economy, is a gross abuse.

The general definition of sociology as the science of society, will be accepted by the Positivist as well as by the Christian. But in order that this definition may be intelligible, we must know what is meant by *society*, of which sociology is the science.

The word society comes to us from the Latin *societas*, through the French *société*. *Societas* signifies fellowship or association. *Socius*, from which *societas* is derived, signifies a fellow, a sharer, a comrade,

an associate. Used as an adjective, *socius* signifies joining in or associated. The verb *socio* signifies to join, to unite, to associate. The thought running through all these words is that of connection or association. *Societas* is used for "any connection of one person or thing with another," such as business connections, leagues between princes and nations, or connections of friendship. According to the original, therefore, the word society, when confined to human beings, is applicable to all associations of persons with one another. It is used to designate the most intimate associations, and also less intimate relations, such as are formed by natural or national bonds, or by similarity of purpose and pursuit. Both the original *societas* and our derivative *society* are used in a limited and in a more extensive sense. Society applies to the associated capacity of those who live together and form a community, and also to those who live far apart and do not know one another, but are, nevertheless, united by some tie. The word is used in the sense of company, as when we say of a man, "He moves in good society." It is also used to designate any number of persons who associate together for some particular purpose, as missionary, Bible, and tract societies. Persons united by a common faith may also be called a society, as the Society of Friends, or the Congregational Society.* But besides this limited sense, the word is also used in so extensive a sense as to include all men.† Webster says: "In

* The Church is frequently called a society. Thus Melanchthon calls it "*societas fidei et sanctorum*," and also "*societas signorum*."

† Guizot ("History of Civilization," vol. iv. p. 102) says:

a more enlarged sense, the whole race or family of man is a society, and called human society." *Sociology, therefore, unless limited by some other word, is the science of human society in its most enlarged sense; or, it is the science of man in his associated capacity.*

In qualifying sociology by *Christian*, the society that is to be described is limited. It is not proposed to give the science of society in general, but only of Christian society. *Christian Sociology may, therefore, be defined as the science of Christian society, or as the science of that society which is controlled by Christian principles.* Its aim is to describe this society; to explain its origin, nature, laws, relations, and purposes. This science will be perfect in proportion as it gives the distinguishing characteristics of Christian society, and indicates the relation of this society to other societies.

Christian society is an expression which is here used in its most enlarged sense, and includes all Christians. It is, therefore, proposed to consider the social laws of the whole family of Christians. But in discussing the principles of Christian society at large, those principles which apply specially to Christians who are more intimately associated, as in a congregation or denomination, will also be discussed. For the laws which apply to Christian society at large must also apply to all societies that are Christian; and the laws which apply especially to individual Christian societies are only deductions or applications of the general laws of Christian society. Just as the term society in

'Society, in at once its largest and most simple sense, is the relation which unites man to man."

its largest sense includes all societies; so Christian society in its largest sense includes all Christian societies; and the principles which apply to the genus must, of course, also apply to the species. If, for instance, the Spirit of God reigns in Christian society, then must that same Spirit also reign in all Christian societies, otherwise they are not constituent elements of Christian society.

Our science does not, however, propose to discuss the laws actually adopted or practised by any Christian society, either at the present time or in the past. In this world all society is imperfect. Even in its purest form Christendom has always had many elements of weakness. Christian Sociology deals with the nature, the principles, the relations, and the duties of perfect Christian society. This is, of course, an ideal, but the ideal is the only real Christian society; for society is not really Christian (but only approximately so) before it reaches this ideal—that is, it lacks just so much of being really Christian as it falls short of this ideal.

From the above it cannot be doubtful whence the materials to form Christian Sociology are drawn. The history of the Christian Church, or systems of Christian dogmatics and ethics, cannot be their source. These materials can be found only in the New Testament. It contains the principles on which all Christian society is founded. When these principles have been stated and arranged, and when the society constructed on these principles has been described, then the various efforts of the Church to realize this ideal society may be compared with this perfect standard. This ideal or New Testament standard of society

must be made the social test of the Church in all ages.

If Christian society were the result of a natural evolution, then we would have to go back to the very origin of man, and trace his social development through its various stages until Christian society is evolved. But we cannot regard Christian society as the result of such an evolution. Instead of a natural development, we recognize in it a new creation. There are in it elements which were not evolved by a process of nature, but which were communicated by a Power above nature. We must, therefore, go back to the period when this new creation took place, and must attempt to discover the elements that enter into this creation. While sociology as a part of philosophy may attempt to trace the social development from the primitive state of man, Christian Sociology, while recognizing the preparation made for it by the systems that preceded Christianity, begins with the introduction of the Gospel as a leavening power into society. It does not, however, ignore man's nature, or the processes of natural development through which man has passed; but it denies that these can account for Christian society. And while thankfully availing itself of all the aid evolution can give it, Christian Sociology offers a helping hand to evolution, in bridging over chasms which this evolution meets in its course of development.

Since Christian social science is based on the New Testament, it must be evident that a careful and correct exegesis is of the utmost importance. Nothing else can take its place. The Protestant principle, that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice,

must be adhered to with unswerving fidelity. With existing systems of theology this science has nothing to do, except so far as they aid in interpreting the Scriptures. In themselves they are no authority. It is not the aim to give a sectarian or a denominational, but a Christian Sociology. And throughout, the question will not be, What does this or that school teach? but this: What does the Word of God teach? For unless it grows directly out of the Scriptures, social science will not be worthy of the name Christian. And in order that it may be truly Christian, it will be improper to shackle the Scriptures with any preconceived philosophical or social system, and make their teachings conform thereto.

The relation of the Old Testament to our science is more remote than that of the New. It sustains to Christian Sociology the same relation as to the other departments of Christian theology. It has, indeed, much that can be used to great advantage by the Christian sociologist, and much that is indispensable to him. It prepares the way for the New, and without the Old the New cannot be understood. But while Christian social science sends its deepest roots down into the Old Testament, it springs directly from and grows on the New.

While thus the material for this as for every other Christian science is found in the Scriptures, it is not found there in a systematic form. It is scattered through the different books without any special order of arrangement. These separate truths must be developed and arranged into a system. This can be done by those only who appreciate these truths, and in whom the same spirit reigns that is found in them.

In other words, the Christian spirit is necessary for this work. Any other spirit will pervert and mutilate these truths, rather than develop and systematize them. In this requirement there is nothing peculiar, but it is universal. No man is fit to develop a subject unless he appreciates it, is in sympathy with it, and has caught its spirit. The man without the Christian spirit can no more be a Christian theologian, than a man without taste can be a musician or an artist.

Relation to other Departments of Theology.

The place which Christian Sociology occupies in theology may be inferred from what has already been said ; but in order to avoid confusion, it is well to be somewhat more explicit. Though growing out of the exegesis of the New Testament, Christian social science is not a part of exegetical theology.* Exegesis only furnishes the materials of which the science is to be constructed. The sociological truths gained by exegesis do not yet constitute a sociology. These truths have for ages been embodied in Christian society and have been subject to development. It is the duty of the Christian Sociologist to take these truths as they have been developed and form them into a system. His work is similar to that of writers of Dogmatics and Ethics ; and Christian social science is more like these two sciences than any other department of theology. It, therefore, properly belongs to Systematic Divinity. But it must not be regarded as merely a department

* The division of theology into Exegetical, Historical, Systematic, and Practical, is here adopted. While not in every respect satisfactory, it is the best division yet proposed.

of either Dogmatics or Ethics, since it includes both dogmatical and ethical elements.* But even if it could be treated as merely a part of either Dogmatics or Ethics, it would, for the reasons already stated, be better not to do so. It is important now to develop the subject by itself, in order that it may receive proper attention and may be made as complete as possible. It is a system by itself, and its materials are rich enough and its interests great enough to justify, and even to demand, a separate treatment.

It is self-evident that our subject cannot belong to Historical Theology, since its aim is not to show what Christian society has been, but what true Christian society is. Yet the history of the Church may be very profitably studied from a sociological point of view. After the ideal Christian society has been described, it will be interesting to examine how the views of society in the different ages compare with this ideal, and how near the realization of this ideal Christian society has come in the past. In fact, Christian Sociology should have an important influence on the study of Church history. Instead of considering chiefly what councils, popes, princes, and great scholars have done, historians should pay more

* If Dogmatics and Ethics were treated as one science, as under the title of Systematic Divinity, then Christian Sociology might form a part of it. But theologians now generally treat them separately. There are advantages in this separation, since they are distinct, and since each is likely to receive more attention when considered separately. But, on the other hand, we find the dogmatical and ethical elements united in Scripture, and they are really so intimately connected that they scarcely admit of a separation. Accordingly, Nitzsch ("System der christlichen Lehre") and other writers object to their separation.

attention to the sociological truths and developments of the different periods. History must, of course, show how the doctrine of God was held and developed in the Church; but, surely, the doctrine of man and of society, as held and developed in the Church, should not be ignored. And our science is well calculated to direct attention to the neglect of the sociological elements in ecclesiastical history.

Owing to its practical interests, some may be tempted to regard our subject as a part of Practical Theology. But this would be as wrong a classification as it would be to make Ethics a part of Practical Theology. It is not merely practical, but also theoretical. It does not merely teach what society ought to do, but also what it ought to be; and it also treats of the principles of social conduct and of the relations out of which the social duties grow. Besides, the first great aim of our science is to know; this itself decides that it does not belong to the department of Practical Theology.

Some who admit that Christian Sociology is properly a part of Systematic Divinity, may be inclined to treat it as synonymous with Ecclesiology. But to this there are very serious objections. Ecclesiology does not treat of Christian society as such, but of the Church; while Christian Sociology treats of Christian society in its largest sense, whether organized into a Church or not. Unless the word *Church* is used in a very loose sense, there may be Christian society in a place where there is no Church; and Christians may enter into many social relations which are not ecclesiastical. Two or three Christians in heathen lands, where there is no Church, would nevertheless form a

Christian society and have social duties. Christian Sociology is, therefore, much more comprehensive than Ecclesiology. While the latter treats only of the Church, the former treats of Christians in all their social relations. The Church is, indeed, a Christian society, or rather it has in it Christian society, and it is therefore included in Christian Sociology, but it is only one form of this society. Our subject would be entirely too limited if it were confined to the discussion of the Church and ecclesiastical organizations and institutions.

From what has been said the position of our subject and its relation to the various other departments of theology are evident. For its materials it is indebted to exegesis and the development of Christian thought. It does not treat of God, except so far as he is related to human society ; nor of the individual, except so far as he sustains social relations ; nor of Christian doctrine, except so far as it teaches man's relation to his fellow-men ; nor of Christian ethics, except so far as it treats of social duties ; nor of history, except so far as it helps us to understand Christian society. All the various truths it discusses are regarded from a social point of view ; and it aims to concentrate all the light of the Gospel on human society or into a social focus.

While it is a part of systematic theology, our science will be found to sustain an important relation to all the other theological sciences. So intimately are the various departments of theology connected, that a complete separation is neither desirable nor possible. And our subject, however much it may differ from other branches of theology, can draw important

lessons from them; and, on the other hand, it may also exert an important influence on them. The latter may be illustrated by its relation to Apologetics. Christian Sociology is not, indeed, intended to be apologetic. It addresses itself to those who already receive the Gospel. But, at the same time, it may exert a decided apologetic influence. The social elements of the Gospel are such as to commend themselves to all who can appreciate them. The social laws of Christ and his apostles are, beyond all question, the most perfect that have ever been promulgated. And if the perfection of these laws can be made apparent in Christian social science, it will be a strong argument in favour of the entire system of Christianity. If there are in a system many plain teachings and also some mysteries, the wise man will judge of the mysteries by the things that are plain. There is in the Gospel much that is above human comprehension. This is what might be expected in a divine revelation. We are not now in a condition to understand fully God and his relations, or man and his destiny. But there are, also, in the Gospel many teachings which can be easily understood and whose reliability can be thoroughly tested. Evidently, the most rational method of forming a correct estimate of that Gospel is, to take all that can be comprehended and to determine its value. If the plain teachings are unworthy of credence, then the reliability of that which is mysterious and cannot be subjected to the ordinary tests, may well be questioned. But if all of the Gospel that can be experienced and thoroughly tested is found to be reliable, then there is strong presumptive evidence that the doctrines which appeal directly

to faith are also reliable. According to this method we simply judge of the unknown by the known quantities. Thus y and z being known, we find through them the unknown value of x. This principle is acted on daily, and thus its rationality is admitted. From what is known of a man, or a society, or a party, or a government, or a system, inferences are drawn respecting their general character. And these inferences are favourable or adverse according as that which is known of them is good or bad. There is no good reason for not applying this test to the Gospel. In fact, no more rational way can be found for testing the reliability of its mysterious elements than by its plain teachings. Whilst the philosopher recognizes the value of this test, and consciously applies it, many practical men apply it unconsciously, and thus assent to its validity. Therefore vigorous efforts should be made to bring out clearly and strikingly all the teachings of Christianity respecting man's social relations. The candid mind must recognize the beauty and superiority of the social laws of the Gospel, when clearly presented in a system. And when it is seen that these laws are intimately connected with all the other parts of the Gospel, growing out of them and into them, so that they are but parts of an inseparable whole, it will be seen that they are a correct sample of the Gospel itself, a specimen from which the character of the whole may be inferred. Viewed in this light, it will be found that Christian Sociology has an important apologetic value. It would, indeed, be strange if a system from which such a sociology grows were false.

The above may suffice to indicate the nature of our

science and its relation to other departments of theology. It is more difficult to indicate its relation to recent works on sociology. As a rule, they do not claim to be Christian, or even theistic. Their relation to Christian Sociology is, of course, very remote.* In some of these works the term social science is used altogether too vaguely. Some include in sociology almost everything that belongs to human affairs, while others scarcely distinguish it from political economy.

In his "Unity of Law," H. C. Carey gives this definition: "Social science treats of man in his effort for the maintenance and improvement of his condition, and may now be defined as being *the science of the laws which govern man in his efforts to secure for himself the highest individuality, and the greatest power of associating with his fellow-men.*" But why, on the one hand, limit social science to man's efforts to maintain and improve his condition? Can all the social laws be reduced to these efforts? And why, on the other hand, include all these efforts in social science? Such efforts may be purely personal or selfish, and not at all social. This definition is, therefore, both too narrow and too wide, since it excludes some things which belong to this science, and includes others which do not belong to it. Why not make social science include all the social relations of man to his fellow-men, and these only? The above definition makes this science selfish, whereas it should

* When Spencer's system of sociology is completed, it may be found valuable as a study preparatory to Christian social science, just as anthropology may be made preparatory to the study of theology. For we can only understand what society is in which grace reigns, after we have studied society without this grace.

be unselfish because social. As "the science of the laws which govern man in his efforts to secure for himself the highest individuality, and the greatest power of associating with his fellow-men," it directs attention solely to the individual as he seeks some end for himself—namely, the highest individuality and the greatest power of associating with his fellow-men. Instead of basing social science on such efforts, or on efforts at all, it must go back to the principles of society and to the relations which men sustain to one another. These relations must give the laws to govern society, and must give the tests by which all efforts to attain individuality and the power of association must be judged. Social science must root in principles and grow out of them, otherwise the term science is a misnomer. If it gives merely rules for efforts and laws for government, then it is an art rather than a science. Unless the term "social" is abused, social science must be regarded as the science of man in his social relations, and must give the laws that grow out of these relations. According to this definition, a purely philosophical social science discusses the relations and laws of society so far as they are discoverable by reason ; and a Christian Sociology is that social science which makes the social relations and laws found in the New Testament the elements of the system.

There is a tendency on the part of some to treat social science as if it dealt only with the material interests of society. This is characteristic of the age, and indicates what base views prevail respecting society. Such a view of social science is, of course, hostile to the spirit of Christian Sociology.

In his recent work, entitled "Principia, or Basis of Social Science," R. J. Wright aims to give "a survey of the subject from the moral and theological, yet liberal and progressive standpoint." Here is at least a commendable effort to bring the subject into more intimate relation with Christian truth, though the author does not aim to give a Christian Sociology. His definition of social science is very unsatisfactory. He says (p. 19): "Social science may be defined to be the philosophy of politics. It is a kind of *high politics*." Further on he says: "Social science is moral in its very nature." "The science of society is the science of the dispensations of Providence." But a clear and complete definition, giving the scope and the limits of the science, is wanting. Nor is the relation of social science to Christianity satisfactorily indicated. He says: "Social science and Christianity run parallel to each other most of their length; social science doing for society, in most things, what Christianity is doing for the individual." This implies that Christianity has no social science, but only runs parallel to it, and that it affects the individual only, and not society. Surely this is a wrong view of Christianity, and the fact that it is held by a man of intelligence is a striking evidence of the neglect of the social science of Christianity.

Our subject must not be supposed to be allied to socialism or communism, whether established on a religious or infidel basis. Sociology is a science, while these names have generally been used to designate communistic efforts to ameliorate the condition of mankind. Modern communism is largely godless, and does not, as a rule, appeal to the Bible for its principles.

Some communists have, however, claimed to find authority for their views in the Bible, and have appealed to Acts 2 : 44, 45, and 4 : 34–37. But the communism there spoken of was totally different from that in our day. That was for the sake of the poor, not for the sake of enriching the community; it was voluntary, no one being obliged to sell his possessions and put his money into the common treasury (5 : 4); it was merely local; some believers evidently did not sell their possessions (12 : 12); and it was only temporary.

Method.

From the definitions given, a general idea may be formed of the vastness of our subject. The number of objects included is so great, and they are so diverse, that it is difficult to classify them and arrange them into a system. But the very variety in the objects makes a sytematic arrangement of them all the more necessary, in order to avoid confusion, and to gain a clear conception of all that pertains to our science. The method to be pursued in Christian Sociology is, therefore, a matter of great importance.

To regard the substance of a system as all-important, and the form as a matter of indifference, is evidence of superficiality rather than of depth. The very idea of system implies an appropriate form, as well as the right kind of substance. The substance cannot be properly represented, unless a proper form is chosen. Truth unsystematized is like the rough marble of the quarry, which requires much labour and skill to give it the form of a beautiful statue. But however important the form of an intellectual system

may be, it exists for the sake of the substance, not the substance for the sake of the form. But some form the substance must have, and it should have the best. The method adopted should not merely embrace all the truths of the science, but it should also give every truth its proper place and its proper relation to all the other truths.

There is no method which is universally regarded as the best, and as equally adapted to all subjects. Even if all subjects could be cast in the same mould, it would be better not to do so. The monotony of such a process would be intolerable. Different minds prefer different methods. To this fact we are largely indebted for the diversity in the treatment of the same subjects. But different substances also demand different forms. And it is manifestly improper to choose a form arbitrarily, and then force it on a subject, or force a subject into it. The truth must itself be the artist, creating its own forms. The substance is the spirit which creates its own body, shapes it, and adapts it to its own use. Truth should be treated as living; and a system should be regarded as a growth from a principle as its seed, rather than as a mechanism. And that form into which a subject naturally grows is not only the best, but it is the only one really adapted to that subject.

Very properly, the inductive method is used in the natural sciences. But, surely, there must be some great principle lying back of all these sciences, and inherent in them: this principle must determine the laws of these sciences. May not the time come when these sciences shall have made sufficient progress and generalizations to discover this principle? If this

principle is discovered, it will bind all the natural sciences into one grand system or one grand science; it is the principle which makes and which explains the cosmos. When this principle is found, all the laws of nature will be included in it, and may be deduced from it. There must be such a principle; all the laws of thought presuppose its existence; and such a deduction of the laws of nature from it is possible in the abstract, though the human mind may never discover that principle, and may never be able to deduce from it the laws it contains. But it may yet be found that even in the natural sciences induction is followed too exclusively, and that the exclusion of metaphysics is an extreme, a reaction against another extreme—namely, the scholasticism of former ages; and that for the attainment of the most perfect system, the deductive must be connected more than is now the case with the inductive method.

The Positivist, rejecting metaphysics and regarding sociology as a natural science, subjects it to the inductive method. He does not begin with a great principle from which he develops the entire system; but he takes the separate facts, and from them he makes generalizations and draws laws. We, on the other hand, seek the great principle of Christian Sociology, from which the whole system grows. We recognize the fact that the system already exists—not in word, indeed, but ideally. We cannot make it; we merely aim to discover and to describe it. It is not stated in so many words in the New Testament what Christian Sociology is, nor is it given in a systematic form; but it lies back of the teachings of the New Testament. The sociological truths of the Gospel are but the out-

croppings of this system. The system itself exists in the mind of God; and it forms part of the realm of truth, which realm, though invisible, is as real as the realm of nature. Indeed, it is more real; for truth is the eternal substance, of which the things that appear are but the passing phenomena. We cannot create truth; we can only discover the truth which already exists. It is a web woven by the hand of the Almighty; we pull our threads here and there, weave them together again, and call the result a system. The cognition of truth, of course, affects the mind; but it does not in the least affect the truth, since that exists all the same, whether we recognize it or not. In all study, the aim should solely be to discover existing truth. In Christian theology, for instance, the aim should be to follow the Divine mind in its thinking, to discover its plan, and to trace out its system. While we do not create (produce) the truth, the Christian thinker aims to reproduce the Divine thought and system.*

But how can we discover the system of Christian Sociology? Evidently, not by adopting a theory of the natural evolution of society, and then following the development of society until Christian society is evolved. The principles of our science cannot be found by tedious generalizations from the facts of history. As the essential elements of the system are already given in the New Testament, we must search for them there. By careful and thorough induction we can there find the great social laws of the kingdom of God. But the inductive method need not be

* On this subject there are very valuable thoughts in Beck's Einleitung in das System der christlichen Lehre."

exclusively followed. The great principles of Christian Sociology are given by Christ and his apostles; and when these are found, the whole system of Christian social science may, under the constant guidance of the truths of the New Testament, be deduced from them. If the cardinal principle can be found—which lies at the basis of the entire subject, and determines its character—then by means of the deductive method the whole system may be evolved as it were, from that principle. The very process of forming the Christian life and our social relations as Christians seems to make this the natural method. By whatever process a man may have been brought to Christ, he does not practise one Christian virtue after another until he is thoroughly a disciple of Christ. In other words, his practice is not the source of his relation to Christ as his follower, and is not the source of his religion. The process is the very reverse of this. Being made a child of God, he practises the Christian virtues—that is, his relation to God is the source of his practice. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." It is thus through our relation to Christ that our Christian life and all our relations as Christians are formed. That is, the process of forming the Christian life is but a deduction of that life from our relations to Christ. And in order to get the best system of the Christian life and its relations, we have but to follow the same process. In Christ we have the principle of

the Christian life and of all its social relations; and we must follow the process of forming the social relations in giving a system of those relations. In his "Logic," Trendelenburg says: "A subject can be fully understood only in the same manner in which it originates." The idea is that, in order to understand a subject thoroughly, we must follow it in its genesis. This is true in all departments of knowledge, in the domain of nature as well as in that of mind and of spirit. But more especially is this the case with all historical subjects. No event of history, and least of all a great historical fact life Christianity, can be understood, unless it is studied in its development from its generative or creative source. The universal law of this genesis is: From the seed springs first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. And if this is the only true method for the study of a system, then, of course, it is also the only true method in describing a system. And whenever the principle, whence the system grows, can be discovered, it should be made the starting-point of the system.

In describing a living system, the aim should be to retain as much as possible the *life* of the system in the description. Unless the life is retained, the description will not correspond with the reality, A living system should be described as it *is*—namely, as living, not as dead. So essential is this that its neglect is fatal to any system. But the retention of any degree of life in the description is very difficult. We are so accustomed to the scholastic method of divisions and subdivisions, without any living connection between them, that it is not easy to adopt another method; and even if another is adopted, it will pro-

bably be subjected to the charge of being unscholarly and unscientific. Yet, for a living system that method is the most scientific which is most lifelike. It is, indeed, the only true method. For to describe a living system as if it were dead, is not to describe it at all. Each part of a system should grow naturally out of the preceding one; and the whole should grow out of the living seed (principle) containing the whole; and the entire system should form a complete lifelike organism.

For every subject there is one perfect system, and one only. This system cannot be constructed arbitrarily, nor can it be formed by a purely mental process and then adapted to the subject. The subject must not merely enter the mind, but the mind must also enter the subject, thoroughly penetrating it, and learning from it what its nature is. Instead of adapting the subject to our thinking, we must adapt our thinking to the subject. The subject itself must be the creator of our conception of it, so that the subject is the productive and the mind the receptive agent. The result of this process will be to make our thinking of a subject *real*—that is, it will correspond with the reality. Our thought of an object should be that object translated into thought. In the perfect idea of a subject, the idea corresponds perfectly with the reality. And all thought is perfect in proportion as it harmonizes with the object of the thought. But it must be evident that this *real* thinking is possible only if we penetrate a subject, let it control our thinking, and let it unfold its own system in our mind. The genesis of the subject itself must also be the genesis of our thought on that subject. Then, and

then only, will the subject be the mould determining the form of our thought and system.

What is here said is not intended to depreciate a keen analysis and severe logic. Let these be as rigid as possible; but let their aim be the preservation, and not the destruction, of the life of the system. For we can better afford to reject an analysis and a logic* which are consistent only with a dead system, than we can afford to destroy the life of a system. If, however, it is found that the life of a system cannot be retained in the description, then let it be clearly understood that the description is no more like the reality than a corpse is like a living body. Let there be as much dissection as possible, but only for the sake of forming a better idea, and giving a better description, of the living system. But, as a rule, dissection is possible only when the life is extinct.

In theology, as well as in mental science, the attention has often been directed so exclusively to analysis that synthesis, which should have followed the analysis, and for the sake of which the analysis should have been undertaken, has been entirely or very largely neglected. Often theology and the mind have been treated as the anatomist treats the corpse. No wonder that the result has frequently been death rather than life. In mental science the faculties of the mind are often carefully analyzed and described; but after this

* There is no true logic except that which describes the process of all healthy thinking. It does not consist of arbitrary rules, nor of mere rules of any kind, but it is the science of thought. While it shows how men ought to think, it also shows how all, who really think, do think. And it is a pity that the interesting and all-important process of thought is sometimes represented as a lifeless skeleton of rules.

has been done, it is generally difficult to form a clear conception of the mind as a totality, and of the various faculties as they perform their functions in unity. The most important thing is that in which the faculties inhere, which underlies them all, and constitutes them one mind. Yet this unity is the very thing that is often lost sight of. The mind is treated like a piece of machinery, which is taken apart, and all the parts are minutely examined and described; but the parts are not put together again and studied in their relation to one another, and in their union in one piece of machinery in running order.*

The same course has also been pursued in theology. The anatomical process has often been carried on so exclusively as to leave nothing but a corpse of divinity. Thus we have anatomized systems of dogmatics and ethics, which give no correct idea of the totality of Christianity. Such a system of dogmatics has often left the impression that Christianity is merely dead orthodoxy; a view which cannot prevail where Christianity is apprehended as a totality, and is described according to its life. Christianity, as well as the mind, has in it living principles which will not

* Herbert Spencer says in *The Popular Science Monthly* for August, 1873, p. 425: "The analytical habit of mind has to be supplemented by the synthetical habit of mind. Seen in its proper place, analysis has for its chief function to prepare the way for synthesis; and, to keep a due mental balance, there must be not only a recognition of the truth that synthesis is the end to which analysis is the means, but there must also be a practise of synthesis along with a practise of analysis." There are also some excellent remarks on analysis and synthesis, in Sharp's "Studies in Poetry and Philosophy," beginning on p. 285. See, also, Rothe's "Ethik," 2nd edition, pp. 5–18, and Beck's "Einleitung in das System der christlichen Lehre."

submit to dissection. And to lose sight of these is to lose sight of the very essence of the Gospel.*

What is here said is specially applicable to Christian Sociology. It treats of that which is pre-eminently living, and therefore it should be made as lifelike as possible. But even after the utmost has been done in this respect, we should remember that there is more life in the reality than can be put into an intellectual system, more than can be translated into thought.

In order that the work on a subject may be scientific, it must give the laws of that subject, and must arrange them into their proper system. And the task to be performed is not done until the system is completely rounded off. A system that is perfect forms a circle which, of course, ends where it began. Hegel says† that every part of philosophy is a circle ("ein sich in sich selbst schliessender Kreis"). The whole of philosophy, however, is a circle of circles, or it is a circle including all the various circles that constitute

* To me the retention of the life of Christianity, in all departments of Christian thought, is a necessity. If in the science of theology I cannot retain this life and give it full recognition, then I will regard this science as merely tentative, and as coming far short of the reality. There is no Christian doctrine which has not some relation to life; and no doctrine can be fully apprehended, unless seen in this relation. Dead doctrine is no more Christian doctrine than dead religion is Christianity. Julius Mueller has well said, in his "Lehre von der Suende:" "That is genuine philosophy which places the truth itself higher than the scientific form, and which is determined to abrogate every method and to begin the construction of a new one, as soon as it is convinced that the method adopted is too limited to embrace the reality." (Fourth edition, vol. i. p. 8.)

† Hegel's "Philosophie," published by Frantz & Hillert, 15–16.

the different parts of philosophy. The starting-point of a system must also be its end, so that philosophy is a circle ending in its beginning.* If, for instance, nature is mere force, then a perfect system of nature must start with the idea of force; this idea must be developed, or force must be followed as it develops or breaks into all the forces of nature; and the system will be completed when all the forces have been fully developed and traced back, or united into the idea of force with which the system started. Nature here teaches us an important lesson. The plant starts from a seed, and its end is attained in the production of seed like that from which it sprang. The plant reaches its completion and attains its perfection in seed—its end is as its beginning. The Apostle Paul gives the outlines of the most comprehensive system possible, in Romans 11 : 36: "Of him [God], and through him, and to him are all things." Here God is the end as well as the beginning of all.

The law here stated is applicable to every perfect system. The idea lying at the basis of the law is, that a system starts with a principle which is unfolded throughout the system; and when completely unfolded, we still have in the end the very principle from which the system started. It is evident that every adequate principle must contain in itself the system which springs from it.

This is the ideal of a system. We cannot expect

* "Auf diese Weise zeigt sich die Philosophie als ein in sich zurueckkehrender Kreis." Hegel himself starts with being the most pure and abstract, and ends with God, or being in the absolute sense. In the beginning and at the end there is simply the idea of being.

its full realization in any subject, and least of all in one so new and vast as Christian Sociology. But in the efforts to construct a system, this ideal should constantly be kept in view.

An exhaustive analysis and discussion of the subjects embraced in Christian Sociology are neither possible nor desirable. The thinker does not want the truth to be so minutely developed as to require nothing of him but to accept it as offered. Works so minute as that serve rather to dull than to quicken thought. He that thinks for himself prefers to have the principles of a system clearly defined, and living, suggestive thought, growing out of these principles, stated, without exhausting every topic discussed. With these principles fixed in his mind, he can himself apply them to specific cases. He wants seed-thoughts, which can strike root in his mind and produce fruit; not heaps of straw with all the seeds threshed out. Even the ordinary reader, if he can grasp principles, does not want the truth to be too minutely developed. For him, too, that book is best which, instead of wearying, suggests and excites thought. In this respect, those works on ethics are a failure which treat the system of morals as if it were nothing but a series of rules of conduct. Slaves who are controlled by fear and cannot be trusted to draw correct inferences from principles, and children who have not yet learned to think, may need specific rules for all occasions. We can well see the need of the minute directions, even in matters of ceremony, in the Old Testament. But under the Gospel it is different. That makes men free. Instead of bringing in a new law, Christ brings the Gospel, whose very words

are spirit and life. But this Gospel, so rich in great principles, in comprehensive laws and in suggestive thought, is often treated as if it merely introduced a new code of laws, instead of that living spirit which gives and applies the law for every occasion. Many who write on theological subjects scarcely rise above the legal standpoint. Instead of grasping the great principles of the Gospel, which include the law, they rather attempt to drag the Gospel down to the law, and to make its beautiful garment of righteousness a strait-jacket.

The method adopted in the discussion of a subject is liable to change. As the subject is more thoroughly mastered in the course of time, a better method of treatment may be discovered. It cannot be expected that in the very beginning a science shall at once attain its ideal. Thus we cannot yet expect to give the science of Christian Sociology in all its perfection. The great principle of the system may, indeed, be discovered; but it will require much study, and perhaps a long time, before the whole system can be drawn from this principle. Now it is of special importance to show that the system of Christian Sociology is possible and important.

In the following chapters it is the aim to give some of the leading principles and thoughts of the system. Till the close of the ninth chapter, the attention is directed chiefly to the doctrines concerning Christian society, or the dogmatic elements of Christian Sociology. In these, the aim is to give an idea of the nature and relations of Christian society. The doctrinal is followed by the ethical part—from the tenth to the close of the sixteenth chapter—in which the duties

growing out of the nature and relations of Christian society are discussed. As the conclusion of the whole, a chapter is given on the Passion for Humanity, which passion Christian Sociology is calculated to create and promote.

FIRST PART.

THE NATURE AND THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

THIS part of Christian Sociology might be called Christian Social Dogmatics, since it contains the doctrinal elements of the system. Its aim is to show how Christian society originated, what it is, and what its relations are. The importance of this doctrinal element is very great, since everything else in Christian Sociology depends on it. We must know what Christian society is, before we can understand its duties. Right social practice depends on a proper view of the social relations.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENESIS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

WHATEVER may enter into it as constituent elements, Christianity is essentially life. It is more than mere theory or doctrine, which are, indeed, included in it, but are not Christianity itself. Men may acknowledge intellectually that all the teachings of the Gospel are true; and yet unless that Gospel is in them a living power, which produces a life corresponding with those teachings, they are not Christians. We must, therefore, distinguish between Christianity itself and a mere theory or doctrinal system of Christianity. From its introduction into the world till the present time, wherever Christianity has been, there it has been a living power, an active life; and whatever variety it has exhibited in different ages, and under different circumstances, this life has always been essentially the same, including the same doctrines, controlled by the same relations, and manifesting the same spirit. It has not, indeed, been a dreary monotony in the ages through which it has passed, but a unity with all the variety of real life.

This life is peculiar, differing from the life that existed before its introduction, and also from the life which has since that time been found outside of Christianity. Its peculiarity consists in its origin, in the elements which constitute it, and in its relations.

At present the origin of that life is to be considered. This life is embodied in Christian society, and it makes that society Christian ; and the genesis of this life is also the genesis of that society.

For more than eighteen centuries Christian society has been a fact, and has been the most important factor of history. How do we account for its existence ?

Since the time of Hegel the effort has repeatedly been made by writers to construct history according to their philosophy. Those who pursue this method do not ask with unprejudiced minds what the facts of history are, and then let them speak for themselves ; but, having constructed their philosophy independently of history, they shape or interpret the facts of history according to their philosophical system. Especially has this method been pursued by different schools in discussing the origin of Christianity. Those who adopt it cannot be convinced of the existence of facts which are in conflict with their philosophical theory, whatever amount or kind of historical evidence may be advanced to prove them. They cannot impartially test the facts of history, but always give to them the colouring of the preconceived notions through which they view them. If, for instance, the view is adopted that a miracle is impossible, or that it is more probable that testimony is false than that a miracle should occur, then, no matter how strong the evidence may be, it will be rejected. Such a position, in fact, puts the mind in a state in which it is unfit to judge of the reliability of evidence.

To every one not biassed by such prejudice the irrationality of this procedure must be evident. Facts

are too stubborn to be thus tortured to mean anything that an arrogant system of philosophy may demand. Our philosophy, if at all worthy of the name, must comprehend all facts, and must be in harmony with them; or, if inductive, it must start with facts, grow out of them, and explain them. But the facts of history are not dependent on our philosophy. If philosophy has a right to construct history as it pleases, then every philosophical system has a right to contort facts to suit itself. As a result, there would be as many histories of humanity as there are systems of philosophy. And more than this; whenever men who adopt this method change their philosophy, they must also change their history. We do not doubt that there is a plan in history, and a grand consummation to which everything is tending. There is reason in all events, and there is a guiding hand to direct the issue of everything that occurs. There is no chance. But the human mind has never yet been able to fathom that reason so as to give a science of it; nor has philosophy been able so clearly to unfold that plan in history as to determine definitely just what facts may appear at certain times, and what facts cannot appear then or at any other time. In order that philosophy might do this, it would have to comprehend all things, and be absolutely perfect. But what system has a right to make such a claim? He who knows how changeable philosophical systems are; how very imperfect they are; how liable to err and to need revision; how every profound and original thinker modifies the systems of his predecessors; and how much uncertainty there is in philosophical speculation—he who knows all this must

demand that the facts of history shall be exempt from the arbitrary tampering of philosophers, and that testimony, instead of being excluded by prejudice, shall be weighed according to the laws of evidence. Philosophy can interpret some of the facts of history, not all of them ; but it cannot construct history.

The deistic conception of God, which excludes him from all active interest and participation in the affairs of the world, is consistent with itself when it denies the very possibility of a revelation of the divine will and character, except in nature. With this view deism comes to the study of sacred things, and it interprets them accordingly. Whatever the facts may be, it cannot do otherwise than regard the Bible as a purely human production. So long as the system itself is held, all argument to prove a revelation of God in the Scriptures is useless. If charitably disposed, deism may admit that the writers of Scripture were sincere, but mistaken, when they claimed to be inspired ; when not charitably disposed, it pronounces them impostors.

Rationalism has assumed a variety of forms, from the refined and ideal down to the most vulgar. In general, however, it has been closely allied to deism. In its purest form, it retained in its creed these three articles : That God is a person ; that man is free and responsible ; and that the soul is immortal. This type of rationalism found much in the sacred Scriptures which it accepted especially in the moral teachings. But it also found much that it could not adopt. It treated the fallible human reason as if it was absolute and infallible. Instead of weighing the evidences relating to the statements of Scripture, and judging

them accordingly, rationalism made the fallible reason the absolute test, and rejected, as unreasonable, what that reason could not comprehend or explain. It did not comprehend the fact that things may be far above that reason, and yet faith in them may be perfectly reasonable. Reasonable faith need not be able to explain fully every object it believes in ; but it must rest on evidence that is reliable. This, however, is the very thing rationalism forgot. In its efforts to be consistent with its theory, to believe only what it could understand, it degenerated into the baldest and most prosaic commonplace system. Its efforts to interpret away the miracles recorded in the Bible and to conform Scriptural teachings to its own dreary barrenness and spiritless theories, are an interesting, though rather ridiculous, phenomenon, in exegesis. Its constant tendency, like that of deism, has, of course, been to remove all supernatural and miraculous elements from the introduction of Christianity. It could not understand these elements, and therefore they were pronounced irrational. But rationalism has given no satisfactory solution of the origin of Christianity. It was found wanting by its own disciples, and has yielded the supremacy in scepticism to other systems. In the universities of Germany, where once it held supreme sway, the old rationalism is now an object of ridicule, and is regarded as a system fit for vulgar minds only.

Just now it is popular among sceptics to regard the Christian religion as the result of natural evolution. This view is older than Darwinism ; it strikes its roots in Hegel's philosophy, and is a favourite theory of the negative (the left) side of his school. Christianity,

according to this theory, is regarded as the product of Judaism and of certain heathen elements. But what is there in Judaism to account for the Gospel? The sacred writings of the Jews, the apocryphal books, and the writings of Philo, are evidently not the sources of the Gospel, though to the first of these, the Old Testament, that Gospel is intimately related. And if Jesus took his Gospel from these sources, why did not the Jews, who had these writings, understand Jesus? Why did his own disciples so often misunderstand him? If his teaching was but the product of that age, why was there such a gulf between Jesus and his age? He was not even regarded as a learned man, as one who had studied like the Rabbies: "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7 : 16). And how could such a man, not being learned in the usual sense, produce a system like that of the Gospel from Jewish and heathen sources? Let those who hold this view indicate the sources whence Christ drew his doctrines. Let them go to the Jews, the Indians, the Persians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks, and bring together the elements out of which Christ's doctrine could be constructed; then the theory will have some plausibility, even if it cannot be proved that Jesus and the Jews had access to the views of those heathen nations. Jesus used the truths of the Old Testament, and he may have adapted to his purposes the views of some other teachers; but this does not explain the origin of his doctrines. And yet, if all supernatural influence is denied, then this method of accounting for the origin of Christianity seems to be the most rational. If it is of humanity

and purely human, then it must have been the product of the age in which it arose; then it must have been the result of a natural evolution. Unfortunately, the theory that it is such an evolution is adopted before the question is answered whether it can be accounted for in that way. And when this theory is once adopted, then, instead of an impartial inquiry into the facts of the case, history is made to conform to the theory adopted. Whoever has studied the subject impartially and thoroughly knows that the theory is not the result of historical investigation, but an effort to construct history according to a preconceived notion.

This is not the place to enter into details respecting the many efforts that have been made to account for the origin of Christianity in a purely natural way. Some of these efforts display profound scholarship and masterly skill. To ignore this is folly; to deny it is evidence of ignorance respecting the men and systems opposed to Christianity for the last hundred years. But while giving these efforts full credit for what they have done, it must, nevertheless, be acknowledged that they have signally failed to account for the Christian religion. Many of the learned advocates of naturalistic theories have found them unsatisfactory. Even the Tübingen school, with its mythical theory, seems to have spent its force. Strauss, its most popular representative, abandoned the theory advanced in his "Leben Jesu," though he had no better one to offer. Ritschl, one of its most talented and most scholarly disciples, was led, by the study of the history of the Early Church, to abandon the guesses of the Tübingen school respecting the origin of the

Gospel, and now he is adding valuable contributions to Christian theology. And this school, the most learned and the most formidable adversary of the Gospel in modern times, is now divided; its founders and ablest exponents are dead; and the power exerted by it for the last fifty years seems to be waning.

Placed beside the scholarly works of German rationalists and pantheists, Renan's book on the "Life of Jesus" seems superficial and frivolous. It is hard to persuade ourselves that he himself could believe that he had solved the mystery of Christ. It is very doubtful whether his theory would even account for his own conception of Jesus. He says:* "Jesus has founded religion in humanity, as Socrates founded philosophy in it—as Aristotle founded science. . . . He has fixed for all time the conception of pure religion; every building that has been erected, has been erected on his foundation. In this sense the religion of Jesus is limitless. . . . Jesus has founded the absolute religion, excluding nothing, fixing nothing; his symbols are not fixed dogmas, but images of indefinite expansion." This view of Jesus, imperfect as it is, can hardly be explained on the supposition that he was a mere Jew, with all the imperfections and limitations of the Jews of his day.

While the various forms of scepticism agree in rejecting the supernatural claims of Christianity, there is no theory of its origin on which all can agree. Planting itself firmly on well-authenticated facts of history, the Church need not fear disaster from mere speculations which either ignore or pervert those facts. The ground which is contested is historical

* "Religious History and Criticism," p. 352.

rather than speculative. If the history given in the Gospel is firmly established, it will be one of the best attestations of the truth of the doctrines. And surely Christianity has a right to demand that its claims to recognition as a divine-human power shall be admitted, if its historical proof is well founded, and if its existence cannot be otherwise explained. To assert, without any historical evidence, that the Gospel is a series of myths, containing sublime religious ideas, but not facts; to assert that the disciples created the Christ of the Gospels, when all the evidence of history is against the assertion; or to treat Christianity as if it had arisen accidentally, for which no sufficient reason can or need be given, is simply to despair of explaining the greatest phenomenon of history on naturalistic principles.

In their efforts to account for Christianity, sceptics have generally sought an analogy to Christ's doctrines in the Jewish and Gentile views of religion. Many such analogies can, indeed, be found. But, surely, that is no argument against the divine origin of Christianity. It is the divine method to use the human and the natural, as much as possible, in its teachings and works; and in order that it may affect humanity, it must let itself down to human conditions, and attach itself to the existing human forms. Even among the heathen nations God had not left himself without a witness. There were instincts, intuitions, suggestions, and types of divine things in the nations before Christ, especially in the Jewish nation. Shall we call these things prophetic, finding their fulfilment in Christ? The fact that Jesus taught doctrines which were somewhat similar to these divine elements

already existing in humanity, is no evidence that he was merely human, nor is it evidence that his religion is a mere evolution. If he was divine, it was to be expected that he would recognize those elements, and attach his doctrines to them.

But the question is not whether any analogies to Christ's teachings can be found in the religions prevalent before he came; but this: Can his entire system be thus explained? Going a little deeper still, the question is not merely, How do you account for the doctrines of Christ? but, How do you account for Christ himself? If the historical person of Christ is rejected, then the question is, Whence the Gospel view of Christ? He is the greatest miracle of the Gospel. How is this person, whether historical or mythical, so peculiar, unique, original, and solitary in history, mythology, and fiction, accounted for? To suppose that the illiterate, simple-minded disciples created the Christ of the Gospels is too absurd for serious refutation.*

But this is not the whole of the problem to be solved by the scepticism of the day. We have in Christianity not merely a new doctrine and a solitary

* In the controversies of the day, the origin of Christianity is certainly, one of the most important problems. If Christianity has only elements which already existed before Christ's advent, or if it is a mere development of then existing human religions, then its claim to divine origin must be abandoned. But the Christian scholar may boldly challenge the most thorough investigation of history to account for the natural evolution of the Gospel. The subject is ably discussed by Dorner, in the Introduction to his "Christology." He shows that the idea of the person of Christ, which is the essence of Christianity, is neither a heathen nor a Jewish product.

person, but also a new life, which must be accounted for. This life is peculiar, just as is its source. Is this life an evolution? When scepticism has explained, on natural principles, this system of doctrines, this person, and this life which emanates from this system and this person, it may ask us to abandon our faith in the supernatural origin of Christianity. Unless it can do this, we must be permitted to reject this theory of evolution as credulous, unscientific, and irrational.

If, now, we reject the naturalistic theories as untenable, and accept the Gospel as true, how can we explain the origin of Christian society? It is evident that no law, or code of laws, could have originated it. Laws are not creative, but regulative; hence while they cannot create Christian society, they can aid in governing it when it already exists. Were that society the product of law, then it would lack living principles, and Christian theology would be a system of legality, not of free spiritual life. The Gospel is not a new law, though it includes the essence of the law.

No one who understands and appreciates the character of Christianity can regard its docrines with indifference. So essential is doctrine to Christian society, that without it that society could not have arisen, nor could it continue to exist. Opposition to doctrines truly Christian is evidence either of opposition to Christianity itself, or of a misapprehension of its teachings. Its doctrines are the bones of the Christian system, giving it strength and firmness; but without spiritual life they are a mere skeleton. While regarding these doctrines as indispensable, we do not find in them all the conditions necessary for the production of the Christianity of the past and present.

They are essential to life, but they are not that life itself, nor are they the seed whence it springs. And this life, which no doctrine can create, is the very essence of Christian society—a life that cannot be dissected or defined, but which concentrates into itself and appropriates all the doctrinal and spiritual elements of Christianity. The ideal Christian society is pervaded and governed by this life.

The New Testament itself does not attribute the origin of Christian society to any or all of its doctrines. Christ's teachings, indeed, had wonderful power over the masses and the disciples. "The people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The officers sent to arrest him were so affected by his teachings that they did not bring him, and gave as the reason, "Never man spake like this man." Many passages prove that Christ's teachings produced a powerful effect on his followers. Peter gives evidence of this effect when he exclaims, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." But even in those passages which show the effect of Christ's teaching, there is a reference to something more than mere doctrine. In all, a personal element is brought into connection with the doctrinal—the teacher with the docrine taught. Special attention is directed to Christ himself as the power of the Gospel. It is not his doctrine that is declared to be more authoritative than that of the scribes, but Christ himself is contrasted with the scribes: "*He* taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The officers also direct special attention to Christ: "Never man spake like *this man*." In the language

of Peter this personal element is made still more prominent. (See John 6 : 66–69.) After Jesus had used the boldest figures to indicate his vital relation to his own, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." They did not merely reject his doctrine, but they rejected and abandoned Christ himself. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" The question is not whether they will reject any doctrine he teaches, but whether they will reject him. Simon Peter, the spokesman of the twelve, expresses their inmost conviction when he says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God."* It is the thought of withdrawing from Christ himself, and of severing the personal relation they sustain to him, from which Peter and the other disciples shrink. Their relation to Christ has taught them their need of personal attachment. They feel that if they leave him, they must attach themselves to some one else who can take his place. But who can do this? "To *whom* shall we go?" It is not the doctrine of Christ, separate and distinct from his person, to which the disciples are so devotedly attached; but it is Christ himself, the source of the words of eternal life: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." The words that follow indicate what the central object of the faith of the disciples was: "And we believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God."

Not only in these passages, but all through the Gospel, special prominence is given to this personal element. Christ's testimony respecting himself is as

* This reading is favoured by the best manuscripts.

clear as it is unique, proving beyond all question that he regarded his person as the centre of the Gospel. He demands of his followers faith in his words, but also in himself, in his person. "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life," is but one of the many passages in which Christ presents himself as the great object of faith. The Gospel of John is specially rich in this personal element, bringing it out far more strikingly and prominently than the other Gospels. In the beginning of that Gospel, John represents Christ as the Logos, the Word. Jesus is the revelation of the Father to men; he is the Word which God speaks to humanity, in which Word he reveals his character and will. Not merely the word which Jesus spake, but Christ in his totality is thus made God's revelation. And all through the fourth Gospel Jesus puts himself into the foreground and offers himself to men as the ground of trust and hope. He is the light of the world; he is the door to the sheepfold, as well as the good shepherd; he is the vine, his disciples are the branches; he is the way, and the truth, and the life, and no one can come to the Father but by him. But while specially prominent in the fourth Gospel, this personal element is, by no means, peculiar to it. It is characteristic of all the Gospels. He makes himself the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament; and he likewise prophesies his own coming in the future, thus making himself the grand theme of prophecy, as he does of his teachings. When he foretells the coming judgment, he foretells the coming of the Son of Man in his glory. And though his visible presence is to be removed, he is, nevertheless, to be with his disciples till the end of the world.

The position which Christ thus gives himself is one of the most striking peculiarities of the Gospel—a position such as has never been claimed by any one else for himself, nor for him by others. And this position is not only claimed for himself by Christ, but it is also given him by his disciples. Christ was the grand theme of the preaching of the apostles, as going about and doing good, as crucified, as raised from the dead, as ascended up to glory, as seated at the right hand of the Father, and as giving gifts unto men. In the Epistles, just as in the Gospels, Christ is the central thought. "Christ in you the hope of glory," indicates the relation in which the apostles place Christ to the believer. He is all and in all. The test which is applied to all believers is the confession of Christ himself, not merely of his doctrines. "Hereby know we the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not of God."

There can be no question whatever that Christ himself is the substance of the Epistles, as well as of the Gospels. And it is very strange that, with the New Testament so rich in passages making this evident, theologians should ever have lost sight of this personal element as the essence of Christian truth. Theology has not, indeed, failed to dogmatize about the person of Christ. It has, in fact, analyzed and dissected until there was no life left. But his living person and his personal influence—the power that emanates from him, deep, creative, and lasting, but indescribable—this has not been sufficiently recognized by theology; probably, because it always eluded its

grasp, and would not submit to its definitions, and could not be compressed into its formulas. But, however treated by theology, this personal element has not been ignored by the Christian consciousness. This consciousness, in all ages, and especially in its most exalted states, has not failed to recognize the intimate relation of the believer to the living, personal Saviour. And however barren the theology of an age may have been, this relation has found expression in its Christian poetry and devotional literature. Since the beginning of this century, owing greatly to the influence of Schleiermacher, as well as to the attacks made on the person of Christ, special attention has been directed to the importance attached to that person in the Gospels and Epistles. A healthy reaction against a dead scholasticism in Protestant theology has thus taken place. But there are still many theologians who do not give this personal element the prominence it deserves, and which Jesus and his disciples give it.

If, now, we ask, Whence is Christian society? we find the answer in Christ. He himself, the living personal Saviour—Christ, in his totality, as a person, inclusive of his words and works and all the influences that proceed from him—he is the creator of Christian society. If we take him away, the Gospel is inexplicable. He is, in fact, himself the Gospel. In him are concentrated, and from him emanate, the powers which constitute Christian society. While he is a great spiritual teacher, he is also more than a teacher. He is greater than his doctrine, greater than any system of truth. But even as a teacher his person is of great importance; for in himself as well

as in his words, there is a revelation. In him the Word is made flesh; and in him the fulness of the Godhead is manifested bodily. By means of his theanthropic person we are taught that the human is capacity for the divine, and that the relation of the two may be most intimate. His person is a living illustration of the language of Peter—that men may be "partakers of the divine nature." In him we also have a living and personal illustration of God's love and good will to man. His person is the embodiment of his teaching. By thus including in his person all that pertains to Christ, we find in him a much more adequate source of Christian society than in his doctrines alone. In him we find that life which is communicated to others, and which thus forms that society.

Christ and his doctrines are inseparably connected. His life is the embodiment of his doctrines, and his doctrines are instinct with life. And in order that his teachings may be adopted, that life which is in them must also be communicated. The society which Christ forms is, therefore, a society which embodies his truth in the living form in which Christ himself embodied it in his life; or it is that society to which Christ has communicated his life, and which is to the world a representation of Christ and his life.

Whatever influences emanate from Christ, they do not form this society, except so far as they bring individuals into direct relation and personal communion with him. In organizing Christian society, Christ draws men unto himself. He does not first of all draw individuals together and bring them into the relation of Christians to one another; but he first of

all draws the individual to himself and brings him into intimate relation with himself. This relation of individuals to Christ is the ground or basis of their relation to one another. Andrew is attracted to Christ and follows him. He finds his brother Simon; but he has no power to unite Simon to himself as a Christian brother. He, however, brings him to Christ; and in their union in him they find a new bond of union to each other. After each is thus united to Christ, they sustain to each other a relation different from any sustained before. Now they are spiritual as well as natural brothers. Jesus finds Philip and draws him unto himself. Philip then finds Nathanael and brings him to Christ. Thus one after another comes to Jesus, until the twelve are chosen. Those of them who were truly his disciples sustained, through this very relation to Jesus, a new relation to one another. Being united to him, they are also united to one another by new spiritual Christian ties.

The relation of the members of Christian society to Christ and to one another is beautifully illustrated in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Christ is there represented as the living vine, his disciples are the branches. The branches grow out of the vine, and the life of the branches depends on that of the vine, which sends its own sap through all the living branches. The branches are so intimately related to one another because they are all united to the same vine. Thus the life of Christ is communicated to the disciples; this, and this only, constitutes Christian discipleship. And this life, which flows from Christ, forms Christian society. And because all Christians live in Christ and receive their spiritual

life from him, therefore they are members of Christian society.

While Jesus was bodily present with his disciples, his relation to them was intimate. But it was still dependent on externals, and therefore the union was not the most perfect that was possible. Not until his bodily presence was removed and the Holy Spirit given, was the union perfect. The relation formed by that Spirit was purely spiritual. It was indeed expedient for the disciples that Christ should go away, since that was the condition for his spiritual presence with them. After the day of Pentecost, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." But this oneness arose solely from their spiritual oneness with Christ.

Jesus and his disciples constituted the first Christian society. We include Jesus, because he is the most important element in this as in all Christian society. Although this original society did not enter into all possible human relations, it is, nevertheless, as far as the leading principles are concerned, the model for all the social relations of Christians. All Christian society since that time has been formed just as that original society was—namely, by uniting individuals first of all to Christ, through which union they are also united to one another. At all times and in all places, it is true that whatever persons may believe or do, whatever relations they may sustain, and whatever influences they may exert on one another, they cannot form Christian society, unless they are first united to Christ as the branch is to the vine. The father and mother of a family are the source of the relationship existing between the children. These are

brothers and sisters because they are children of the same parents. And Christians are brethren because of their intimate relation to Christ; and this relation of itself, without anything further, determines their relation to one another. This is true logically as well as chronologically. Christ is the centre and the light of the world. Those who approach him also approach one another. When they recede from him, but few rays of his light beaming on them, they also separate from one another. But when their minds are illuminated by the truth emanating from the Saviour, and their hearts are warmed by his love, then they are near him and near one another, the circle being drawn nearer to Christ; and then, too, Christians are made conscious of the bonds that unite them, while they forget the minor differences which separate them.

In this genesis of Christian society, the position given to Christ, and his relation to the believer, are indeed unique. Other great teachers have been loved and revered; but it was merely their doctrine, or their doctrine and character, which gave them their influence; it was not a spiritual oneness between themselves and their followers. Moses was a great lawgiver and prophet, through whom the theocracy received its organization, and through whom the worship of Jehovah was firmly established. For him, as well as for Abraham their ancestor, the Jews had the profoundest reverence, which bordered on adoration. But even to them no one has ever ascribed that relation to the Hebrews which Jesus sustains to his followers. One can be a Jew without being acquainted with Abraham or Moses. But no one can be a Christian without a personal acquaintance with Christ and

an intimate union with him. By adopting the law one becomes a disciple of Moses; but if the doctrines of Christ could be separated from his person, then the adoption of those doctrines would not make one a disciple of Christ. The same contrast is seen, but it is still more striking, when Jesus is compared with other Jewish prophets and leaders, and with the lawgivers and philosophers and religious teachers of the heathen. The relation of Jesus to his followers was, in fact, the introduction of a new and inimitable element into history. And to this day, in his person and in his relation to his followers, Jesus is as solitary in history as the sun is in the heavens.

The advantages which accrue to religion from this personal element are of inestimable value. While the Gospel presents doctrines to be believed, rules to be obeyed, and promises that cheer, it also brings the Christian into fraternal relations with a divine-human person as the source, as well as the object, of faith and affection. Back of all its dogmatics and ethics and speculation, Christianity places a person who contains more than all dogmatics and ethics and speculation, whom we cannot analyze, but whose power we can feel, whose communion we can enjoy, and whose life and spirit must be the life and spirit of Christian society. This personal element vitalizes all the doctrines and commands and promises. Christ's person is to these what the living principle is to the seed containing it. In that person the Gospel has its source; it is, in fact, the embodiment, in words, of that person. And when that Gospel accomplishes its intended work on the heart, Christ communicates himself, a person to a person, thus making religion thoroughly

personal. In John 6, where Jesus speaks of his flesh and blood, which are to be eaten and drunk, this communication of himself to the believer is taught in a striking manner. That eating his flesh and drinking his blood is the same as appropriating him, the personal Saviour, is evident from the entire discourse, especially from a comparison of the 47th with the 54th verse. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." That is, eating his flesh and drinking his blood is the same as believing on him. The condition of eternal life is the appropriation of Christ as the soul's nourishment. In the 56th verse the true idea is made still plainer: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." That is, by appropriating Christ he dwells in the believer, and the believer in him, which constitutes the very heart of the Christian religion. This mutual indwelling is the characteristic of every genuine member of Christian society.

It is its personal element which makes Christianity such a heart-power. In bringing the heart into immediate communion with a personal Saviour, it supplies a deep need of man's nature. The heart needs a person who is above it and yet of like sympathies, to whom it can cling, and from whom it can receive help and inspiration. In our day many feel the need of such a person. Niebuhr, the historian, says: "I have often said that I do not know what to do with a metaphysical God, and that I want no other than the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart with me." In Christ we have one who is heart to heart with the believer, and who brings him in contact with the very

heart of the Father. This fact makes Christ such a mighty attraction for profound yearning souls. Such a person is more a need of the heart than an intellectual system is of the head. Mere doctrine can never supply this need. And Christian society will be perfect in proportion to the closeness of the attachment of its members to Christ. But this personal attachment must not ignore or depreciate the word and work of Jesus. Unless these are included in the person, there is danger of sentimentalism and fanaticism. While Christ himself is more than his doctrines and deeds, these are necessarily included in a full view of his person. And they cannot be rejected without the rejection of his person. Indeed, these doctrines and deeds are the revelation of that person, and are the means of knowing that person.

When, therefore, Christ is here viewed as the creator of Christian society, he is viewed in that fullness which includes in his person all that is in him and all that emanates from him. Viewed in this light, we have in him doctrine, and ethics, and person, and life—in fact, all the conditions necessary for the creation and development of Christianity. From him Christian society takes its start, in him it must ever live, and to him it must ever tend. He is its Alpha and its Omega.

The genesis of Christian Sociology must correspond with the genesis of Christian society. Christ, in that fullness which embraces all that inheres in him and emanates from him, is the creator of Christian society and the starting-point of Christian Sociology. This starting-point furnishes a basis sufficiently broad and deep and potent. It has the advantage over mere

doctrine, in that it contains all the principles that enter into Christian social science, and also has the personal element and the life, which are wanting in abstract principle or mere doctrine. But besides this, our starting-point is the actual beginning of Chirstian Sociology in real life; and thus we have the advantage of having the same source for the theory and for the practice. And in Christ's example we also have the first practical application of the principles of Christian Sociology and the model for all future applications of the same.

It may be objected that, in making Christ the starting-point of Christian Sociology, we have nothing distinctive, but that he might as well be made the starting-point of every department of Christian theology, since he is the source of everything that is distinctively Christian. In a certain sense this is true. The sciences of Christian Dogmatics and Ethics begin and end with Christ. This fact is being more fully recognized than formerly. But there is an important difference between Christian Sociology and the other departments of systematic theology. In Dogmatics, Christ is viewed only in a doctrinal aspect; in Ethics, he is viewed only in a moral aspect; so that in each of these Christ is viewed, not in his totality, but only in a part of his being and only in some of his relations. Christian Sociology does not, however, take so partial a view. It does not treat of doctrines and morals in the abstract, but as they are in living union with the Christian in his social relations, and as they are in their totality in Christ. What is the great aim of Christ? With respect to the Father, his aim is to glorify God; but with

respect to man, his aim is to constitute Christian society. All that he is to man, or does for him, pertains to this social aim. Thus, Christian Sociology does not, as the other departments of systematic divinity, take a partial view of Christ, but it views him in all his fulness, and all that fulness enters into Christian Sociology. Person, and life, and work, and doctrine, and command—all are necessary to constitute Christian society, and are, therefore, embraced in Christian Sociology. In contemplating Christian society, we contemplate, therefore, Christ in the totality of his person and influence. For this reason he is the starting-point of Christian Sociology in a sense widely different from that in which he is the starting-point of Dogmatics and Ethics. Here we view him, not merely as teacher, nor merely as an example, but in all his relations to society. All the light that emanates from him is here concentrated into a focus, and that focus is Christian society. Then, too, Dogmatics and Ethics do not so much need the living and personal elements as Christian social science. In this we find another reason for beginning with Christ, which is not found in the other sciences with equal force.

We might, indeed, say that in Dogmatics Christ is viewed in his relation to doctrine; in Ethics he is viewed in his relation to practice; and in Sociology, so far as he is the creator of Christian society and sustains sociological relations. But since all that Christ is and does enters into Christian Sociology, we have a right to regard Christ in his totality as the starting-point.

With great propriety, therefore, Christian Sociology

makes Christ the source of all that it is, just as it makes him the source of all that Christian society is. It begins with him, lives in him, and tends to him. From Christ, in Christ, to Christ—that is the whole system. Though it may never be realized, this is the ideal of Christian Sociology beautifully rounded off and complete.

Not merely in point of time does the genesis of Christian society begin with Christ. He is also its creative source, making it possible and real. Its relation to him is such that in him it lives, and moves, and has its being. Therefore, in our attempts to understand Christian society according to its new Testament ideal, we must constantly keep in view what Christ is in relation to this society, what he does to establish and to perpetuate it, and what he teaches concerning it. This, of course, includes the teaching of the apostles respecting this society, since their doctrine has its source in Christ. All this taken together will give the correct view of Christian society and of the Christian Sociology of the New Testament.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS AND RELATIONS OF CHRIST.

WHILE we look to the teachings of Christ for the principles of Christian Sociology, we look to his life for a practical application of those principles. The declaration of a noted infidel, that Jesus lived his doctrine, is true of his sociological teachings. In his sociality the laws of Christian sociability are seen as a living reality. Together with his disciples he forms the first Christian society, and gives the model for believers and their various social relations.

The Gospel is, evidently, not intended to give illustrations of all possible relations into which believers may enter, nor to give specific directions for behaviour in all these relations. As all life begins with a simple seed, which develops into multiplicity and variety, so the beginning of the Christian life in the world was from seed-truth, which was to expand and multiply in the spirit of man under the influence of the spirit of God. The truths of the Gospel are compressed and concentrated, with an expansive power and a creative energy. The world was the fallow ground which had been broken up by God's preparatory work; it was ready now to receive the divine seed which Jesus sowed, whose development was to be left to after ages. The Gospel is thus a repository

of seeds and germs. True, there are flowers and fruits, too; but these are there for the sake of the seed they may bear or contain for future ages. The Gospel is but another illustration of the divine method of making the beginning of an important enterprise small in compass, but mighty in energy. Sometimes the greatness of the power seems to be in proportion to the compression.

Rich as the life of Christ is in illustrating the application of his truth, the illustrations are necessarily limited both in number and in variety. As the truths taught are living seeds, so the illustrations given by Christ himself are types; they are representative of a class rather than of individuals. In these applications of the truth made by Christ himself, we find rather the working of the principles than of the details. It must, therefore, not be expected that for all Christian relations and conduct a specific example or model can be found in the life of Christ. In government and in all departments of society great changes have taken place since that time, and many new relations have been formed. But even where no specific model is found in the Gospel for the Christian's guidance, there are leading principles and great types to direct him.

As a spiritual teacher and as the founder of a new religion, it was natural that Jesus should enter chiefly into relations which are religious. From these, as the highest relations in life, light was to be shed on all others. Jesus was not a politician, and he gives neither specific rules in his teachings nor illustrations in his life for all the duties of the statesman; but the principles of government and the basis of all

statesmanship are given by Christ, so that from the Gospel a system of Christian politics may be constructed. Jesus was not a business man, and hence we must not expect specific models for believers in their various business relations ; yet the essential rules for all such relations are given by Christ.

When Christ is spoken of as the believer's model of conduct, this must, of course, be taken in a general sense. The Christian is obliged to enter relations and to engage in pursuits for which he finds no specific model in the Bible. Some moral subjects are as evident to the Christian conscience as the light is to the eye ; but many others come in the form of problems, the solution of which try to the utmost the conscience. The German language calls every believer a " Christ ;" and the ideal presented to believers of all tongues is that they are to become like Christ. This is the absolute ideal as far as character is concerned ; but in practice we cannot in all respects imitate him. To him belongs a pre-eminence which must not be overlooked. He is sinless and divine ; we are sinful and only human. He is the creator of the Christian life, and believers must ever sustain to him the relation of dependence. Jesus is more powerful than the Christian, has fewer needs, and hence is not so dependent. In his social life, therefore, he is more a giver, and less a receiver, than the Christian. It is thus impossible for any believer to sustain to his fellow-men the same relation which Christ sustains. As a teacher, friend, helper, and Saviour, he is pre-eminent and solitary.

While giving rules for the life of the family, so as to make it Christian, Jesus himself did not marry.

In this respect he surely did not set an example which all are to follow. And it is a perversion of Christian truth to regard him as, in this respect, the model for those who want to attain the highest degree of Christian excellence. Jesus emphatically, in his teachings, sanctions the marriage relation, and nowhere does he even so much as hint that a state of celibacy is preferable. All these things taken together show that the person of Christ, his mission, and his relations to men must determine how far his life is a model for the believer. Nevertheless, with this explanation, we must still regard him as the great exemplar of the believer in his sociality.

The aim of Christ in his social intercourse embraces both individuals and organization. We have already seen that he first of all attracts individuals, and by uniting them to himself he also unites them to one another, he himself being the centre and the bond of union. During his stay on earth his relation is to individuals rather than to organized bodies. Though he unites his followers to himself and to one another, it is rather a preparatory work, laying the basis of a more perfect spiritual union to be brought about by his death, resurrection, ascension, and the gift of the Spirit. But that his ultimate aim is the establishment of a compact lasting spiritual organism, is evident from his many teachings respecting the kingdom of God, as well as from the numerous other passages which speak of the union of his followers. Even in his relation to individuals his aim is to bring all he influences into the most intimate relation with one another, and thus to form them into a spiritual unity. He begins his ministry by preaching the

Gospel of the kingdom of God and declaring that this kingdom is at hand.* The kingdom which he came to establish is a perfect union of believers. God is the founder of this kingdom, and it is a real theocracy; Jesus is the king, his followers are the subjects; God's will is the law of the realm; love is the controlling spirit of the citizens; life and death are the reward and punishment in this divine state.

Christ teaches that his kingdom is not of this world, differing from earthly kingdoms in principles, in character, in aim, and in the methods of promoting its ends. In distinction from them, it is spiritual. It is the kingdom of God because he is its author, and the life that emanates from him is its life. It is the kingdom of heaven because it is modelled after heaven, being a reflection of heaven. As a spiritual divine heavenly kingdom, it is sufficiently characterized as distinguished from other kingdoms. Jesus clearly indicates the aim of this kingdom when he teaches his disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." God's will is thus to prevail in this kingdom as fully as in heaven.

Differing as this kingdom does from earthly dominions in character, so also are the means for promoting it different from theirs.† These means are internal and spiritual. Outward forms are not rejected; but they are valuable only so far as they are the manifestation of spiritual power. Divine truth is the principal element for the establishment and promotion of this kingdom. It is significant that Christ, whose aim was so practical, made the very

* Mark 1 : 14–15 : Matt. 4 : 17. † John 18 : 36.

thing which all philosophers have sought the basis of his kingdom. With his claim to royalty he connects the declaration that he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth, and that every one who is of the truth hears his voice; that is, he who is moulded by truth into the likeness of truth will recognize in Christ, as by intuition, a teacher of the truth, and will be drawn unto him. That he should attempt to establish a kingdom by means of the truth seemed chimerical to those who knew only of force as the means of establishing and promoting kingdoms; and Pilate incredulously, if not sarcastically, asks, "What is truth?"* To a worldly-minded politician the attempt must have seemed to be the height of folly.

The stress which Jesus lays on the power of the truth is an important factor in his sociality. The truth is the basis of his social relations and conduct as truly as of his kingdom. In giving a summary view of what Christ was, the beloved disciple says that he was "full of grace and truth," and that "*the* grace and *the* truth came by Jesus Christ."† By the use of these terms John evidently designs to show what was most striking and most characteristic in his Master. His Gospel makes it evident that John was right in forming this estimate of Christ. Jesus ascribes marvellous power to the truth. The absence of truth is the essence of all evil, and it is characteristic of the devil that he "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father

* John 18: 37, 38.

† John 1: 14–17. The original has the article, which makes grace and truth more emphatic than our version.

of it." But Jesus is the very opposite, the one who tells the truth.* The fact that he speaks the truth is the reason why the Jews should believe him; but this very truth is the ground of their opposition.† As the lie is the essence of the devil's character, so the truth is so characteristic of Christ that he calls himself "the truth."‡ The blessedness of continuing in Christ's word is summed up in these words: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." § This shows the estimate put by Christ on a knowledge of the truth. This knowledge or experience of the truth is put by Jesus as the essence of the blessedness of abiding in communion with him. He also ascribes to truth a liberating power, giving these who have it the liberty of the children of God. When he leaves his disciples, he promises to send them the Spirit. It is characteristic of his estimate of truth that he repeatedly speaks of this Spirit as "the spirit of truth,"‖ and that the office of this Spirit shall be to guide the disciples into all truth.¶ The truth is also the power which is to sanctify the disciples.**

There is something sublime in Christ's confidence in the power of the truth. It frees men, it sanctifies them, it establishes a kingdom that is eternal, and it is the means of overcoming all powers hostile to him. Nor does he want this truth to be received blindly. He lays down a test which every one can apply, and a test, as the philosopher Fichte says, the validity of which the philosopher must admit. "If any man

* John 8 : 44-46. † John 8 : 40, 45, 46. ‡ John 14 : 6.
§ John 8 : 32. ‖ John 14 : 17; 15 : 26; 16 : 13.
¶ John 16 : 13. ** John 17 : 19.

will do his [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."* Indeed, there is much in the Gospels, especially in that of John, which presents Jesus in the light of a divine philosopher. In this light he was viewed by some of those who, in the early ages of our era, earnestly devoted themselves to the search for truth in the various prevalent systems of philosophy, and at last found it in Christ. There were many things about Jesus which were calculated to attract the masses; but scholars were attracted largely by that aspect of Christ which has just been given. Justin Martyr sought the truth in various systems, going from teacher to teacher and from school to school; but he was not satisfied until he found in the Lord the greatest teacher of truth and the sublimest philosophy. Though a Christian, he continued to wear the philosopher's cloak. He became the apologist and then the martyr of the Christian system, even being eager to die for Jesus, whom he called "*The Master of Truth.*" Athenagoras, a teacher of philosophy at Athens, was preparing to write against the Christians, and for this purpose read their books. Like many other, he was overcome by the power of the truth of the very system he was preparing to attack. He became a Christian, but, like Justin, he continued to wear the philosopher's cloak. Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Augustine, and others, were first trained in heathen schools of philosophy, and then found in Christ what these could not give, but which was essential to their peace of mind, and for which their hearts yearned. These philosophical

* John 7 : 17.

elements of the Gospel were recognized in the Early Church; but in our day they are often ignored, especially by those who attack Christianity.

The Gospel is not intended for philosophers only; but, at the same time, it would not be complete unless it met the just demands of philosophers. Hence it is important to note the fact, that the social basis which Christ lays is deep and broad enough to satisfy the needs of philosophic as well as of illiterate minds. The Gospel of Christ is for all humanity, and all classes of minds are to be embraced in Christian society. A philosopher says of Christ, that he is the "oculist who opens to the truth the eye of human reason, obscured by sin, so as to enable it to see with unveiled countenance the glory of God in his works."*

The truth which Jesus lays at the foundation of the society he forms, is not abstract or speculative, but it is practical, adapted and applied directly to human needs. It is instinct with life, and commends itself to the living spirit. All who are spiritual will recognize it as the food to satisfy the hunger of their souls. To the spirit this truth bears directly, without mathematical demonstration, the evidence of its inherent worth and power.

In his social relations and in establishing Christian society, Jesus, as has been intimated, lays no stress on external forms. Supremely was Christianity in its origin an internal power, a life springing from spiritual truth. In this respect, there is a striking con-

* "History of Religion and Philosophy." By J. H. Scholten, Professor at Leyden. Tertullian has a similar thought. He says: "Christianity can give eyes for the recognition of the truth to the refined man misled by false culture."

trast with the law of the Old Testament, which is so full of forms and ceremonies. The Gospel is essentially truth, spirit, life; these are the soul which creates and develops its own body. The forms and organizations which Christian society was to assume were mainly left to the future development of the spirit of Christianity. This is true even with reference to church government and worship. Many evils were prevalent which are not mentioned; not because they are thus sanctioned, but because the new spirit introduced into the word was so potent as to overcome them. Many partial and erroneous views and corrupt practices of society were thus to be removed. All that was necessary, in order to regenerate the whole of society, was the development of the new life which Christ communicated to men. That was the leaven which worked, not externally, but internally, being hidden in the heart, and there working to the leavening of the whole heart and the whole of humanity.

By these means Jesus aimed to form Christian society. The view that Christ aims solely at the salvation of the individual, and that, consequently, his religion has significance chiefly for the next world, and not for this, is totally at variance with the Gospel. He seeks individuals, but he wants to form them into a spiritual unity; he wants to make his followers heirs of immortal glory, but he also wants them to form a kingdom of heaven on earth. Jesus nowhere depreciates this life or this world in the interest of the life that is to come; but he uses the fact of immortality to increase the value of this life. The life in glory is revealed on account of the light it sheds on

this earthly life. And those who think that Christ deals chiefly with the things of the next world, will be astonished to find, on a careful reading of the Gospel, how frequently he speaks of this life, with its duties and responsibilities, and how rarely, comparatively, he speaks of heaven. All through the Gospel runs the thought that if this life is properly guarded, the next life will take care of itself. Even rewards and punishments to come are made to serve as incentives to faithfulness here and now. Though so thoroughly spiritual, Jesus is also thoroughly practical and realistic in his teachings, there being nothing morbid, vague, or dreamy in them.

We consequently find in Jesus sympathy for all that is human. He despises no human being, and teaches his disciples not to despise even the little ones. He is not an ascetic, who regards the body as evil in itself and as unworthy of attention ; but while making the spirit supreme, he honours the body and gives its claims their due. Hence, respecting asceticism, he contrasts himself with John the Baptist, saying, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."* His regard for the body is evident from the fact that he so frequently healed its diseases and ministered to its comfort. The miracles performed on the body are an evidence that he is the Messiah.† He feeds the hungry multitudes who followed him into the wilderness, and frequently he proves his sympathy for men in their physical sufferings.

* Matt. 11 : 18-19. † Matt. 11 : 5.

He ascends the Mount of Transfiguration to commune with Moses and Elias, but he descends in time to answer the father's prayer for the healing of his son. He withdraws into the solitude of the mountain to pray, but appears in time to save his disciples struggling with the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He sympathizes with those in grief, and weeps with the sisters at the grave of Lazarus. His aim is to make men happy here; hence he begins his ministry by pronouncing various classes and conditions of men blessed —as if he meant, at the outset, to show that he came to let heaven's benediction rest on men. He has no gloomy, pharisaic views of the Sabbath; it is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. He does not want earthly duties to be neglected under the pretext of doing God service;* and while the things that are God's are rendered to him, the things that are Cæsar's are also to be rendered unto Cæsar.†

These are but a few of the many illustrations that Christ aimed to adapt his religion to this life, and to make it earthly (in the physical, not moral sense) as well as heavenly. "Christianity is the religion of humanity. To be a Christian is to be a man in the highest sense of the term." Christ's religion is as much a religion for the earth as it is a religion for heaven. Its aim is, in fact, to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth.

One of the most striking characteristics in Christ's social relations to men is his marked preference for the poor and needy. All, indeed, were welcome— Pharisees, Sadducees, the rulers and the rich, as well as the masses. But the people were neglected by the

* Matt. 15 : 5, 6. † Matt. 22 : 21.

teachers; hence they were specially destitute in spiritual things. They were most susceptible to religious impressions; they heard him gladly, were astonished at his doctrine, and some of them declared that like him man never spake. He pronounced the poor in spirit blessed, and made the fact that he preached the Gospel to the poor an evidence of his Messiahship. He sought the needy; he willingly entered into social relations with publicans and sinners, and advocated their cause before those who despised them. The Pharisees thought that he associated with them on the principle that like seeks like; but he acted on the principle that the one who needed him most was most truly his neighbour.

In this relation to the needy, and in so many other social relations, Jesus illustrates the spirit of sacrifice. Nothing is more directly opposed to his principles than selfishness. He came to minister unto men, not to be ministered unto; and he carries his service so far as to wash the feet of his disciples. Greatness in his kingdom is not obtained by dominion, but by service. Christ's whole ministry is a giving of himself for others; and this sacrifice reaches its sublime culmination in the death on the cross.

In his intercourse with men Jesus taught and illustrated many truths which are viewed by some as modern, and which are lauded as the watchwords of modern progress. Some of these truths which Christ taught are appropriated by sceptics as if their own discovery and peculiar property. As these truths are important for Christian Sociology, their mention here is important, though they cannot be fully discussed.

Jesus, for the first time in history, brings out

clearly the fatherhood of God. He is the Father of all men, and all are to look to him as children. Connected with this fatherhood of God is the brotherhood of man. From this relationship no one, however humble or degraded he may be, is excluded, Men are to be free, not slaves, and Christ came to break chains aud open prisons. True freedom strikes its roots in the Gospel, and thence draws its nourishment. Jesus dignifies woman as no other teacher. Strange, indeed, that where the Gospel is professed woman should ever need emancipation. The ignorant Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, though her life was corrupt, was made the recipient of some of the deepest and most spiritual truths uttered by Jesus, and she becomes the messenger to tell the men in the city the wonderful revelations Christ had made to her. Jesus sends Mary Magdalene to his disciples to announce to them the gospel of his resurrection.* Mary of Bethany is permitted to sit as a learner at his feet, and a number of women follow him as disciples. Indeed, there is not a spiritual blessing or privilege which Jesus withholds from woman. In modern times much is made of the dignity of man; but where are man's worth and dignity so fully taught as in the Gospel? Even by unbelievers the gospel of love is preached now; but Christ taught and lived it as no one else has done. He teaches and illustrates a love for others even unto death. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." But these grand truths, so clearly taught by Jesus, have never been fully realized; and that is the reason their special advocacy now seems to some like a new

* John 20: 17, 18.

discovery. But they are truths which for eighteen centuries have lain at the basis of Christian society, and, at the same time, have been the ideal, for the full practical realization of which all earnest Christians have striven.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HUMANITY.

WHILE Christ is the creator of Christian society, and must, consequently, be the starting-point of Christian Sociology, we cannot fully understand the process of forming that society unless we know what those are from whom he forms it. To understand Christian society we must understand the Christian view of humanity. It is not necessary to enter into details here, nor to attempt to give a Biblical anthropology or psychology; it is sufficient to give a general outline of the doctrines of Christ and his apostles respecting humanity.

For the understanding of the Gospel itself, its view of man is essential. This view, in fact, interprets its whole economy. As a general rule, our theology is as our psychology. It makes a radical difference in a man's theology whether he regards man as merely material, or as also spiritual; as really sinful, or as only unfortunate. In an age of prevailing scepticism the psychological basis of Christianity is specially important. And when there is a loud cry for a religion for humanity, it is time to show that Christianity is such a religion. Unfortunately, the Biblical view of man has not been brought out with sufficient clearness

by theology, probably because its importance was not felt. Man is the soil; and the divine seed of truth, that it may grow on it, must be adapted to that soil. There must, accordingly, be a correspondence between the Biblical view of divine revelation and man's nature. Underlying the doctrine of God's grace is the Biblical doctrine of man's capacities, needs, and helplessness. Spiritual influences presuppose spiritual receptivity; and they would be useless without it. Fortunately, we have in the Scriptures a deep insight into man's nature, as well as a revelation concerning God.

In its direct teachings we find in the New Testament but little concerning the nature of man. Christ and his disciples generally appeal to that nature without philosophizing about it. They do not, for instance, attempt to prove the existence of conscience or of man's spiritual nature, any more than they try to prove the existence of God. But their whole mission and their appeals indicate that they recognize in man a conscience and faculties for the appreciation and apprehension of the spiritual. For, had man no spiritual faculty, then it would be as foolish to speak to him of spiritual things, as it is to speak of them to the brute. The Christian view of man must, accordingly, be inferred from the New Testament, rather than drawn from its direct teachings on the subject. But these inferences are unmistakable. And nowhere else do we find such deep views of man's spiritual nature. The Bible has a psychology of its own, and the different writers bring out peculiar psychological views. Biblical psychology is one of the most recent of the theological sciences;

but its importance, especially to him who studies the deep things of Scripture, is very great.

As man's faculties and relations are very varied, he may be viewed from different standpoints. He may be viewed as physical, intellectual, or spiritual; he can be considered with respect to his material relations, or with respect to those which are intellectual, or spiritual, or social. The Bible does not ignore any of these relations, but it views all of them from a spiritual standpoint. The Gospel concentrates its view on man in his relation to Cod, and makes everything subservient to this view. Man has significance for the Gospel because he is a religious being; hence we find that Gospel specially rich in its views of man's spiritual nature; and all his powers are viewed in their relation to this nature.

The thought that man was created in the image of God underlies the New as well as the Old Testament view of man. It is self-evident that this likeness to God is not physical. It consists in man's spirituality, in the fact that he has free personality. Man's original likeness to God was twofold. In the first place, he was created with a spiritual nature, was made a free person; in the second, he was pure—that is, sinless. This second element of God-likeness—namely, sinlessness—man has lost. The sinless has become sinful. This lost image is restored by Christ when he restores the lost purity. But man's spiritual nature remained after the fall. This is the essential element of God's image, while sinlessness is a state or quality of this image. This spiritual nature makes a man man, and is indestructible; so far, therefore, as this nature constitutes the image of God this image is

inalienable. When the Bible, therefore, speaks of this image as lost, the idea is that man has lost his original purity and is become sinful. But when it speaks of man as still having the image of God, the idea is that after the fall he still has a spiritual nature, and in that respect is like God. In Genesis 9 : 6, we read : "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man." Here the shedding of man's blood is forbidden because man was made in God's image. That image in man is the reason why murder is prohibited. Here God's image is, evidently, regarded as something that belongs to man as man, consequently as destructible only with the destruction of man himself. In Acts 17 : 28, 29, it is also taught that this image remains. In James 3 : 9, it is said of the tongue, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father ; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God."*

* Kahnis, "Dogmatik," i. p. 551, says : "It is contrary to Scripture to place the sinful condition of man in a total renunciation of his higher nature. The Scripture attributes to every man a consciousness of God (Rom. 1 : 19), a conscience (2 : 14), a capacity for truth (1 : 18), for morality (2 : 14 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 1), an inalienable (unlost) image of God (Gen. 9 : 6 ; Acts 17 : 28 ; James 3 : 9) ; yes, a participation in the light that shines in the darkness (John 1 : 6). That the propensity for the truth and for the good in the natural man forms a basis for grace to operate on, is taught beyond question by passages like John 3 : 21 ; Acts 10 : 34 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 1."

See, on the image of God in man, Herzog's "Encyklopædie," first edition, vol. 3, p. 614–617 ; Sartorius' "Moral Theologie," third chapter ; Thiersch, "Lectures on Catholicism and Protestantism," twenty-third lecture. The Catholic view is given by Moehler, in his "Symbolics," first book, first part.

But while man retains his spiritual nature after the fall, it is perverted by sin. He still has spiritual capacity, but it is weakened; he is still capable of spiritual apprehension, but imperfectly. His soul was originally a mirror that reflected God. Now that man is sinful, the mirror remains, but it is so soiled that it reflects God either very imperfectly or not at all. We, therefore, say that man retains the image of God so far as he is still a spiritual being; but that so far as sinlessness is concerned he has lost this image.

It is his spiritual nature that makes man differ essentially from the animal. In some respects the difference between man and the animal is one of degree only, as in the case of some of the intellectual functions. But the spiritual nature of man makes a difference in kind between him and the animal. For in the animal not the slightest trace of a spiritual element is found. In reality a man may be no more holy than the brute is. But there is this vast difference: the latter can neither be holy nor unholy, since these terms can in nowise be applied to it; but man may and must be either holy or unholy. The brute is not free, and never can be; consequently it cannot be moral or immoral. But man is free, and therefore a moral agent. In many respects and in many cases, the difference between a man and an animal is rather one of capacity and possibility than of reality. A man can never be a brute, unless he ceases to be man. He may, indeed, sink lower than the brute, simply because he can degrade himself, which the brute cannot do. But he may also rise infinitely higher than the brute. Man moves in a sphere of vast dimensions. The place he occupies in the sphere,

whether high or low, depends largely on his own choice, not absolutely on the necessity imposed on him by nature. For the animal there is no sphere in which it moves, but only a line along which it is impelled by the absolute necessity of nature.

The original endowment of man with the possibility of sinning was a wonderful endowment. This possibility indicated the exalted character of his being. With the capacity to sin is also connected the capacity to be holy; and with the power to degrade himself is also connected the power to rise to the greatest glory. Freedom is man's prerogative. It is the condition for rising into companionship with God and sharing his glory, as well as the condition for sinking into companionship with Satan and becoming devilish. Though man was made for communion with God, this communion, from the very nature of the case, is possible only if man himself chooses it.

The Gospel views man as moral capacity, using the word moral in a sense which includes the spiritual. This is evident from the fact that the Gospel addresses to man religious truths and makes spiritual appeals to him. If man has no spiritual nature, then the Bible is inexplicable. If it is from God, then man must, of course, have a spiritual nature, since to that the Bible is addressed. But if the Bible is of human origin, then the proof that man is spiritual is equally conclusive; for how could a being with no spiritual faculty produce a book so purely spiritual? The fact is, that if the Bible is regarded as a purely human production, it is an irresistible argument for the spiritual nature of man.

While the Gospel does not ignore man's body and

intellect, it regards them as subordinate to the moral nature, and as the means through which that nature accomplishes its purposes. The whole man, in fact, is judged according to his moral state; that determines the quality of his entire being. The Gospel places the spirit of man on the throne, and makes everything else pertaining to him subject thereto. Christ and his apostles are purely spiritual teachers, and the New Testament is purely spiritual. It, indeed, sheds a bright light on all the relations of life; but it is spiritual light reflected from its spiritual truths. Its aim is to make the spiritual in man predominant, and to spiritualize all his relations. It wants to make the spirit of man what it ought to be; for then all the acts and relations of that spirit will also be right.

The prominence given by the Gospel to the moral nature makes it evident why it lays so much stress on the condition or quality of this nature. When it came from God's creative hand, it was pure; but, now, instead of that original purity, it is fallen and perverted. Instead of seeking communion with God and of living in harmony with him, this nature is turned from him and is averse to him. That all men without exception are sinful is taught in the Old as well as in the New Testament. Not only is this explicitly stated in numerous passages, but the whole economy of the Scriptures is based on this view of man. "The Scripture hath included all under sin" (Gal. 3 : 22). The prevailing idea is, that sin is transgression of the law of God, whether it be the transgression of this law as revealed in nature, which is the case with the heathen, or of the law of Moses, as in the case of the Jews.

In the New Testament man's sinfulness is regarded as the most striking and the most startling fact in his natural state. It is no more evident, according to Scripture, that man has a moral nature, than it is that that nature is thoroughly corrupt and diseased. The Scripture gives a deep insight into this sinful state. It does not reason much about it; but its appeals, and its penetration into the heart, reveal the real character of man. Paul, however, especially in his Epistle to the Romans, philosophizes about sin. With the fact of sinfulness the New Testament also teaches the consequences of sin, both in this life and hereafter. Sin is the great curse that rests on the whole man, so that he himself is sinful—not merely his words and his acts; and not merely on his moral nature, but on the whole man rest its blighting influences; and it affects, not merely his religious, but also all his other relations.

The clearness and pointedness with which man's sinfulness is taught are well calculated to awaken the conscience and to produce deep conviction of sin. But if the Gospel did no more than this, its effect would only be keen remorse and utter despair. But the fact that man is sinful is not made more prominent than the fact that he is redeemable. Indeed, the redeemableness of man is of such transcendent importance that it is the very essence of the revelation in the Gospel—it is the Gospel. And the fact that man is sinful is made so prominent for the sake of leading him to repentance and redemption. A knowledge of sin and repentance are not an end, but the means for the attainment of holiness.* And when in one com-

* The Germans would say that repentance is a "Durchgangspunkt;" that is, it is not something in which we are to remain, but through which we are to pass to something beyond.

prehensive sentence Jesus states his mission, he says: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." That is, the end of Christ's coming is, not to teach man that he is sinful, but that he is redeemable, and to redeem him. This fact, that man is redeemable, illumines the pages of the Gospel with hope, and makes it the "good tidings of great joy." So rich is the New Testament in its teachings of man's redeemableness, and so universally is this admitted, that it is not necessary to quote particular passages. Indeed, unless man is redeemable, the whole scheme of redemption is vain.

The Scriptures thus teach three great central doctrines respecting man—first, that he has a moral nature; second, that he is sinful; third, that he is redeemable. All that they teach concerning man presupposes these cardinal facts. Sin and redemption—these are the constantly reiterated themes of the Gospel. Man as sinful, yet as redeemable—these are the two aspects in which man is constantly viewed in that Gospel. But the Gospel does more than this: it also shows *how* man is redeemed.

According to the Christian view of humanity, society is divided into two classes—those who have been redeemed by Christ and are Christians, and those who are sinful and redeemable, but have not yet been redeemed. That is, humanity consists of the redeemed and the unredeemed; of those whose sins are pardoned, and of those whose sins are not yet pardoned. These two classes constitute what is called Christian society, on the one hand, and what is called the world, on the other, using the term world to designate the unregenerate, in which sense it is frequently used in Scripture.

But all men, irrespective of their spiritual condition, are the children of God. We are so accustomed to speak of Christians only as the children of God, that we are apt to overlook the fact that the unconverted also are his children. It is true that when God is called "Father" in the New Testament, it is generally either as the Father of Jesus Christ, or else of believers. Even Ephesians 4 : 6, where God is called "Father of all," is no exception to this rule, as it is evident from the context that "all" here refers to believers only. There are, however, passages which clearly teach that he is the Father of all men. To say that he sustains this relation merely because he is the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of man, is only saying that he sustains to man the same relation that he does to all his creatures, and that he is the Father of man as he is of the animal. That would be an abuse of the term Father as used in the New Testament. His relation to man must be peculiar to be paternal. This peculiarity is found in the fact that he made man in the image of God. It is this likeness to God that constitutes him man. It has already been shown that this image is not entirely destroyed by sin, and that it never can be, unless man himself is destroyed. This likeness to God is the ground of the relation between God and man as that of father and child. This explains how God is the Father of man as he cannot be of any other creature. Thus, in Acts 17 : 26–29, man is regarded as the offspring of God in a sense in which no other object is. God is there said to have made of one blood all nations; and the aim of their creation is, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, though

he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being." This intimate relation of man to God is further illustrated by the apostle in a quotation from a heathen poet: "As certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we also are his offspring.' Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." It is evident that Paul here teaches that man as man (not the regenerated merely) is the offspring of God, his child, and that, too, in a sense in which gold and silver, and all merely material objects cannot be. The likeness of man to God lies at the basis of the 29th verse. This is the argument: Since man is God's offspring, and like unto him, God cannot be like unto gold or silver, but he is infinitely superior to these, just as man, God's offspring, is superior to them. The doctrine here taught is, that man as man is God's child, and that God sustains to him a peculiar relation—namely, that of a father.

In Luke 3 : 38, the whole human family is traced back to God as its Father, where it is said of Adam, "which was the son of God." From the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15, the natural inference is, that all men are sons of God. Even after the younger son leaves his father's house and becomes the servant of another master, he is still a son. No matter where he is, what his character, or how he lives, his relation as son is not destroyed thereby; just as the most godless and disobedient son of godly parents is still their son, however unworthy he may be of that relation. Until he returns to his father's house, the younger son in the parable represents the

condition of the impenitent. He still recognizes himself as a son, though he feels that he is unworthy to be called a son. "How many hired servants of *my father* have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to *my father*, and I will say to him, *Father*, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to *his father*." Then we are told how the father received him: "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned," &c. Thus the younger son is still a son, even before he returns home, and the father remains to him a father. He was, it is true, a dead and a lost son, but a son still. The inference from this parable is, that man's relation to God as a son is inalienable. Turning his back on God, and departing far away from him; living in a land foreign to God, in revelling and in debauchery; the slave of a foreign master; feeding swine; in a spiritual famine; and spiritually lost and dead—man is still a child of God.

Humanity, therefore, and not merely a part or party thereof, is the family of God, and he is the Father of all men. But if he is the Father of all, then are all men brothers. In teaching this intimate relation of humanity to God, and of men to one another, Christianity far transcends the particularism of Judaism and the caste systems and national selfishness and prejudice of heathen nations. The Gospel lays no stress on race, or nationality, or rank. In every man it sees a likeness to God, and his child, and a moral nature that is sinful but redeemable. While it does not put all men on the same level, it never-

theless sees in all common powers and common sympathies, common possibilities and common needs. Therefore, its truth and its grace, its Saviour and its God, are for all.

There is great significance in this Christian view of humanity. To Christianity, humanity as a family, with God as its head, is a reality, and not a mere name. It brings the members of this family into the most intimate relation with God as Father, and with one another as brothers and sisters. It may, indeed, be difficult to grasp and to realize this deep and comprehensive view of mankind, but its importance is commensurate with its difficulty. A clear conception and an appreciation of this relation are essential for the enlargement of our interests and the widening of our sympathies beyond the narrow limits of selfishness and the ties of relationship and friendship. Where the fact is realized that all men are God's children, and that wherever there are human beings there we have brothers and sisters, it must enlarge the heart and extend the circulation of its affections. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man realized make man's interest in humanity sublime. And how this view enlarges the sphere of duty! Not only are we related to every one in this family as a brother or sister, but if we can in any way aid them it is our duty as well as privilege to do so. Put this Christian view of humanity as the basis of home and foreign missions, and as the basis of all ministerial and Christian work—what a motive-power and inspiration it gives to enthusiasm and zeal! The Gentile may ask, Who is my brother? The Jew, Who is my neighbour? And Cain, "Am I my brother's

keeper?" But to the Christian there can be no question on these subjects.

It must not, however, be overlooked that, with the few exceptions referred to, the New Testament always speaks of the children of God in a sense in which the expression is applicable to those only who are Christians. In Romans 8 : 9, it is said, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." In Matt. 5 : 44, 45, it is taught that we should love our enemies, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," implying that those who do not love their enemies are not the children of God. These and other passages deny sonship to all who do not love, worship and obey him. Thus we read, in Romans 8 : 14, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God," which implies that those who are not led by that spirit are not his children. How can such passages be reconciled with the view that all men are the children of God? We use the expression "child of God" in two senses. In one sense it designates those whom God has made in his image, and for whom he gave his Son. God is not merely their Father in the sense of Creator, but he is their Father because he gave them his image and made them for communion with himself. In this sense all human beings are the children of God. In the other sense a child of God is one that loves God as a Father, and obeys him. The same distinction here made between the children of God is made between the children of a family. While all the descendants of the same parents are children, some may be loving, obedient, and good, while the rest are unloving, disobedient,

and bad. God also has two kinds of sons. To each he says, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard."* The one obeys, but the other disobeys. This indicates exactly the difference between the two classes of God's children on earth; one class is loving and obedient, the other is unloving and disobedient. We therefore make this distinction: *Naturally*, all men are the children of God; but in a *spiritual* sense only those are his children who love and obey him. This idea of natural and spiritual sonship is strikingly illustrated in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The younger brother is, indeed, a son while away from his father, but only a natural son; but when he returns home he is a spiritual son also. In order that he may pass from a state of natural to spiritual sonship, the lost must be found and brought home, and the dead must be made alive.

The idea of natural and spiritual relationship is taught in Matt. 12 : 46–50. Being told that his mother and his brethren (natural relationship) stood without, desiring to speak with him, Jesus said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren (spiritual relationship)! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." That is, this spiritual relationship does not depend on natural ties, but on doing God's will. Christ's disciples sustain this new spiritual relation to Christ, to the Father, and also to one another. Thus Andrew and Simon are brothers (natural relation); but after both find

* Matt. 21 : 28–31.

Christ they are also brothers in another sense (spiritual relation).

There is thus a natural sonship and there is a spiritual sonship. There is also a natural and there is a spiritual family of God. There is a likeness to God which is only that of nature, which has its source in creation, and which is greatly marred by sin; and there is a spiritual likeness to God, that is, a likeness in spirit, in affection, in deed—a likeness that has its source in the new creation, in regeneration. In the spiritual sonship the image of God is restored to its original purity. Of the natural sonship Adam, "which was the son of God," is the historic head; of the spiritual sonship Jesus Christ is the historic head. The former sonship has only nature; the latter has also grace. There is also a natural brotherhood, consisting of all the members of the human family; and there is a spiritual brotherhood, consisting of those who are made spiritual through Christ. Jesus is the elder brother in the spiritual brotherhood, and those who are brothers to him must also be brothers to one another.*

The spiritual brotherhood is synonymous with Christian society. This is formed from those who are members of the natural brotherhood; but in entering this spiritual brotherhood they do not cease to belong to the natural brotherhood.

* Matt. 28 : 10; John 20 : 17; Rom. 8 : 29; Heb. 2 : 11; 1 Cor. 6 : 6; 8 : 11; 2 Thess. 3 : 15. The word "brotherhood" is used only in 1 Pet. 2 : 17.

CHAPTER V.

THE MEMBERS OF THE SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD.

WE have already seen that Christ is the organizer of Christian society and the centre of attachment. The character of the natural society, from which Christian society is formed by Christ, has also been considered. Christ is, so to speak, the creative Artist; the natural family is the material on which he works; this material he fashions into the spiritual family of God, according to the divine ideal. We are now prepared to consider the members of this family who constitute the Christian brotherhood.

This brotherhood, or Christian society, is a spiritual organism within the natural brotherhood. It is an organism, since the individuals in this society form a body, to which they are related as members, being united to that body in a living manner. It is not a mechanism in which all the parts are united into a whole, but not in a living manner. This society is as really an organism as is the tree or the animal. But it is a spiritual organism—that is, the means of union are not merely vital, but they are also spiritual. But this means of union, while not material but spiritual and invisible, is not less real and vital than in the most perfect material organism. Christians form an organized community of spiritual life. This concep-

tion of Christian society as a spiritual organism is Scriptural, being taught by the figure of the vine and the branches, and also by that of the body and the members. Every time we speak of the individuals composing Christian society as members, we recognize the fact that this society is an organism.

The members of this spiritual organism are a part of the natural brotherhood, and possess all that is essential to it; but they also have some things which those who are members of the natural brotherhood only do not possess. There must be a change in the natural man, and something must be added to him, before he can be a member of the spiritual brotherhood. But the introduction of a man into the spiritual family is by no means, and in no sense, an unhumanizing process. In becoming a Christian he does not cease to be a man, nor does he lose a single trait of true manhood. He can say, with truth, "Nothing of humanity is foreign to me." The fact is that the spiritualization which constitutes a man a Christian, instead of interfering with his humanity, makes it more real. It makes a man more a man, by removing from him all that is in conflict with his true nature, and by developing all the essential qualities of that nature. The real Christian is the highest type of manhood; for he is the realization of the ideal of man.

It is important to urge what may be called the humanity of the Gospel; that is, its human character, its adaptation to man, and its power of restoring to him his lost manhood. We can sanction no view which regards the Christianizing of man as an unnaturalizing process. The Gospel proposes to restore the

diseased man to health, and to develop the healthy man to that perfection for which he was created. It aims to perfectly humanize man—to destroy the dross, that the gold may appear in its original purity and beauty. But to say that in Chirst is restored what in Adam was lost, is giving only a partial view of redemption. Besides this restoration, Christ also develops what he restores. Through him believers are justified, and in him they are sanctified.

The view here adopted regards sin as foreign to man, and therefore as unnatural to him. It is unnatural, because it does not correspond with his true and original nature, but is diametrically opposed to it and subversive of it. Sin is man's greatest enemy, and is in irreconcilable conflict with his original nature and design. Instead of naturalizing man or developing his true nature, sin makes him a monster. While sin is foreign to the true man and subversive of his real manhood, the divine is natural to him and an essential element of his true nature. The divinity in man's true nature is evident from the fact that God created him in his own image. This fact the Gospel recognizes. It puts no impassable gulf between the human and the divine, but shows the intimate relation between them—a relation which nothing but sin can destroy. Hence, when we speak of Christianity as the most divine of all religions, we must not forget that it is, at the same time, the most human and the most natural, just because it is the most divine—that is, it corresponds most fully with man's true (original) nature and design.* This

* It is by no means claimed that man in his unregenerate state need but develop his powers in order to become spiritual. By

nature sin has polluted, so that man in sin is no longer truly man. In order that his true manhood may be restored, sin must be destroyed. When fallen man returns to God, he returns to true manhood and comes to himself. While he is in sin the man is lost; purged of sin, he finds himself again; in sin he is dead; purged of sin, he is resurrected. Christianity, therefore, in redeeming him from sin, naturalizes and humanizes man.

When a man comes to himself—that is, when he is Christianized—he becomes a member of the spiritual organism. By means of this process, all that is

such a development he could only reproduce what is already in him, namely, sin; but by no evolution of man as he now is can there be a production of the spiritual. That is the result of a creation, not of evolution. If man had not sinned, then all human development would have been holy. But sin (a foreign master, Luke 15 : 15) reigns over him, and its dominion must be destroyed before he can be himself again (Luke 15 : 17). The above, therefore, does not conflict with the doctrine of man's utter helplessness, and dependence on divine grace for salvation.

The word "natural" is used above in its philosophical, not in its theological sense. It refers to man's original and true nature before the fall, which introduced a false element into man. In 1 Cor. 2 : 14, "the natural man" is the unregenerate—and this is the usual theological sense. In such passages natural is opposed to spiritual; whereas above, natural is opposed to man's fallen (sinful) state, and designates that nature which God originally gave man.

It is strange that "natural" should be used in senses that are diametrically opposed to each other, but this is nevertheless the case. Thus it is used to designate that which is in harmony with man's true original nature, that nature which God gave him; and it is also used to designate man as sinful, that is, as the very opposite of that which God made him. The natural (sinful) man is thus also the most unnatural man. The opposite senses of the term natural are calculated to lead to great confusion of thought.

foreign to his true nature and design is removed, and his true manhood is restored and developed. This is not done at once, but is the result of the process when it has done its perfect work. The redemption of man is accomplished by Christ. Sin has made it impossible for man to make himself acceptable unto God. He is bound by fetters which he cannot break, and he owes a debt which he cannot pay. When the sinner realizes most fully his condition he feels that he needs a Redeemer. But besides the mere act of purification from sin, he also needs help to a better life. He must be born of water, that he may be clean, but also of the Spirit, that he may have a new living principle in himself. He needs pardon, but that is merely negative ; he needs also the creation of a new life in himself ; he needs grace in order that he may grow in grace. Now, all that man needs to restore his true manhood and his perfect likeness to God is offered in Christ. He prepares the way for man's redemption, and he actually redeems man. The act which restores man to himself is called conversion. By this act the antagonism between God and man is changed into harmony. Sin is overcome, so that it no longer reigns, but grace reigns. The disposition is changed, so that the affections and seekings of a man are different from what they were before. By conversion the natural is also made a spiritual child of God.

Conversion designates a single act, the great change which makes a man a member of the spiritual organism. There are, however, many things which characterize those who are thus changed and constitute Christian society. They follow Christ, commune with

the Father through him, love the brethren, and work for Christ's cause. In summing up all these characteristics into one, we say that a new life is originated in conversion, a life from God, with God, and unto God. For all that Christ communicates is living and tends to form life. Like all life, this truly free and spiritual life cannot be compressed into the formulas of mathematical definitions. It will be enough if here we seize its central idea, the germinating principle whence it springs, which determines its character and form as truly as the seed determines the plant that springs from it. The seed whence the spiritual life springs is faith. The Christian life is a life of faith, and the distinguishing characteristic of the members of the spiritual brotherhood is that they are believers. But, in order that this distinguishing peculiarity of Christians may be understood, we must define faith as here used.

The word faith is used in a variety of senses in the New Testament. In all cases, however, faith is more than mere perception ; it is always " the assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition." In whatever sense the word is used, there are always two elements in faith—namely, the assent of the mind and an object to which it assents (the subjective and the objective). When it is said that a man has faith, we may ask, *what* does he believe ? and *how* does he believe it ? We thus distinguish between the object of faith and the psychological element in faith.

The objects of faith are infinite in variety. But here we are dealing only with those that are mentioned in the New Testament. In Matt. 9 : 28, Christ's power to work miracles is presented as the

object of faith, when he asks the blind men, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Frequently Christ's doctrine is the object of faith, as when he says, in John 5 : 47, "How shall ye believe my words?" The Father and Christ are also frequently presented as the objects of faith, as in John 14 : 1 : "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Special doctrines are also represented as the objects of faith in the Gospels and Epistles.

The object of perfect Christian faith includes all that is taught in the New Testament. This is the goal of the Christian's aspirations. But here the question is not, What must the object of Christian faith be when perfect? but, What must the object of faith be in order that that faith may be Christian? In order that one may be a Christian, he must believe in Jesus Christ. This is the simplest and yet the most comprehensive statement of the object of Christian faith. Peter's confession must be that of every Christian: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16 : 16). The confession of the Samaritans (John 4 : 42) is similar: We "know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John the Baptist makes essentially the same confession (John 1 : 29): "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And in 1 John 4 : 2, we read: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." See also 1 Cor. 12 : 3 ; 2 : 23 ; 5 : 1 ; John 3 : 16; 1 : 12; Gal. 3 : 26 ; Acts 4 : 12 ; 16 : 30. From these passages it is clear that the New Testament makes Christ himself the central object of Christian faith. He that has true faith in him is a Christian ; he that rejects

him, whatever else he may accept, is not a Christian. There can be no question that this object of faith is presented with sufficient clearness in Scripture for all practical purposes. The development of the fulness of thought in this central object of faith must be left to dogmatics. But nothing can take the place of the simple statements of Scripture respecting Christ. And while deeply grateful for all that learning has done for the doctrine respecting Christ, it is well to remember that human inferences from Scriptural doctrines are not inspired, and that the traditions of the elders sometimes obscure rather than explain Scripture, and that they are not a blessing when they crowd out Scripture and take its place. In the New Testament itself, Christ is the embodiment of Christian doctrine —is more than mere doctrine, for in him we have a person. Whoever accepts Christ as the Saviour with a living faith is a member of Christian society.

Just as the New Testament represents various objects of faith, so also does it represent psychological or subjective differences in faith. Without specifying these differences, we shall at once investigate the psychological character of saving faith, whose object we have just found to be Christ.

This faith has its seat in the heart. In Romans 10 : 9, 10, we are told what the word of faith is which the apostles preach : "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." To understand this passage, we must examine the meaning of the term "heart." It must

not be taken in the sense usual now, as merely the seat of the emotions, but in that deep and comprehensive sense in which it is frequently used in Scripture, as the centre of man. In this sense it is the seat of thought and volition, as well as of the emotions. Thus, instead of representing only one of the functions of the soul, it is rather the union of all those functions. The term "heart," in this deep Scriptural sense, represents that part of our being in which all our faculties inhere, and whence all our mental and spiritual operations proceed. It is the union of all now commonly called intellect, susceptibility, and will, and consequently includes them all. Sometimes we use the term soul, or spirit, or inner man, in a similar sense, as including all our inner operations. Thus, as the heart is the centre of man's physical system, and as all life depends on it, so, in this figurative sense, the heart is the centre of the inner life and the source of all its operations.*

With this explanation of the term "heart" as the seat of faith, we can easily answer the question, Whether faith is an act of the intellect, the susceptibility, or of the will? It is not the act of either of these separately, but of all conjointly. There are in faith

* In the comprehensive sense indicated above, the word "heart" is used, Rom. 10 : 9, 10; 1 Pet. 3 : 4; 2 Pet. 1 : 19; Heb. 13 : 9; Luke 21 : 34, and in other passages. It is also used as the seat of the separate inner operations. As the seat of the understanding, Matt. 13 : 15; John 12 : 40. As the seat of the emotions, Acts 2 : 26; John 16 : 6. As the source of the acts of a man, Matt. 12 : 34, 35; Acts 5 : 3.

The use of the term "heart" in Scripture is explained by Delitzsch in his system of Biblical Psychology, and by Beck in his "Seelenlehre."

intellect, susceptibility, and will. It is, in fact, an act of the whole man, the assent of his entire being. It is true that sometimes the stress is laid in Scripture on one of these elements, sometimes on another; but in order to get a full view of faith, all the passages referring to the different elements in faith must be taken together. Different theological systems have laid the stress on the one or the other element, to the neglect or exclusion of the rest, the result of which was, of course, a defective view of faith. Dead orthodoxy lays the stress on the intellectual apprehension, while the emotional and volitional elements are neglected. Many ministers prove by their preaching that they give the emotional element undue prominence; their aim is to produce excitement and to make emotional Christians. The Romanist lays special stress on the volitional element, and his religion makes the mere outward act meritorious, and thus introduces pharisaic legalism into Christianity. Indeed, systems, as well as individuals, are apt to be one-sided in this respect. But only when faith has an intellectual and an emotional and a volitional element, is it complete; only when it enlists the whole man is it saving faith. Christian faith sees Christ, loves Christ, and lives according to Christ's example and command. And saving faith may be defined as the receiving of Christ unto self and the yielding of self unto Christ. This receiving Christ enlists the whole man, and the whole man is yielded to him.

This explanation enables us to understand why faith is made the condition of acceptance with God, and why the Scriptures ascribe such great power to it. Without this faith the Gospel remains external

and foreign to man; with it the Gospel becomes an inner living possession and a controlling power. Because it is so deep and enlists all the faculties, therefore it changes the whole man and affects all his operations. He who has this faith does not merely receive the object of faith and make it his, but he also bends himself toward that object, adapting himself to it. In genuine faith there is always an assimilation of the subject of faith to the object of faith; that is, there is a constant tendency to make the believer like the object in which he believes. Thus, he that heartily believes in Christ is thereby made like Christ; and he who believes in God is made godlike. Faith is thus a transforming power. It works like leaven. As the leaven leavens the whole lump into which it is put, making it all leaven, so faith changes the whole man into the likeness of the object of faith. It is this potency of faith that gives it such prominence in the Gospel, and that makes it the seed of the Christian life and the distinguishing mark of spiritual society.

Among the apostles, Paul brings out this view of faith most clearly, and it may be called the Pauline doctrine of faith. There are, it is true, passages in his writings in which the word "faith" is used in a different sense, as in 1 Cor. 13 : 2. And the other apostles, especially James, also use the word in a different sense. But whenever it is used in its peculiarly Christian sense, as the condition of salvation, it is taken in this deeper and more comprehensive signification. This is the faith that saves, and this is the faith that Paul preaches in opposition to pharisaic legalism and all dependence on human merit.

Faith, in this sense, is the sole condition of salvation.

It, in fact, includes everything that is Christian. On the one hand, when psychologically perfect, it enlists the whole man; and, on the other, when Christ, the object of faith, is fully apprehended, it includes all the objects of Christian faith. It includes all the Christian graces. It is a faith that works by love, and includes good works, just as the acorn does the oak that springs from it. Good works are the natural product of Christian faith. In accepting and appropriating Christ, faith accepts and appropriates all the fulness that is in him, and bears as fruit all that is wrought by him.

This view of faith is the same as that held by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, especially by Luther. Since the days of the apostle Paul, no one had a deeper and more evangelical view of faith than the grand hero of the Reformation. To understand that Reformation, we must understand its view of faith and its central dogma of justification by faith. When the Roman Catholics wanted the Reformers to acknowledge that it is not faith alone (*sola fides*) that saves, but that love is also necessary, the Reformers refused to yield the point. The two parties evidently used the word "faith" in different senses—the Reformers including in it all that constitutes a Christian (the Pauline sense), the Catholics, however, regarding it as only one of the elements of religion, as something that might exist without love and good works (the sense in which James uses the word). Luther says: "Believers are a new creature, a new tree; therefore, all such language as is used in the law is not applicable to them, as the following: A believer ought to do good works. Just as it is not proper to say that the

sun ought to shine, that a good tree ought to bear good fruit, that three and seven ought to be ten. The sun need not be commanded to shine, but does so unbidden, according to its very nature, since it was created for that very thing. So a good tree brings forth good fruit of its own accord. Seven and three are ten, and cannot be anything else. Therefore, in these cases, we ought not to speak of what *ought* to happen or be, but of that which really *does* happen and is." Thus Luther regards good works as the natural product of faith, just as light is the product of the sun, and as good fruit is the product of the good tree. Indeed, living faith cannot help itself; it must do good, since that is its very nature. It simply acts according to the law that like produces like.

Owing to this deep significance of faith, it is very properly regarded as the chief characteristic of Christians, as that which distinguishes them from the world, and by which they are to be known. They are, therefore, called *believers*. Acts 5 : 14, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." In 1 Tim. 4 : 12, Timothy is exhorted to be an "example of the believers." According to John 1 : 12, those have received power to become the sons of God who have believed on the name of Christ. There are many passages teaching the same truth. And we learn from Scripture that Christian society is composed of those who believe in Jesus Christ This faith is not only the bond of union between the believer and Christ, but also between believers themselves. The process of making men members of this society con-

sists in making believers of non-believers. *And the spiritual brotherhood may now be defined as an organism of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The nature of this faith will enable us to understand the conditions for its formation. Were faith merely a matter of intellectual conviction, then a demonstration of the truth to be believed would be sufficient. But it is a matter of heart-conviction; hence it is necessary to do more than convince the intellect. For understanding the formation of Christian faith, the psychology lying at the basis of Christ's discourses in John's Gospel is of great importance. From this it is evident that the state of a man's heart has much to do with his faith. The Pharisees could not deny the miracles of Christ, especially the giving of sight to the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. And yet these miracles did not make them Christ's disciples. There was no lack of evidence in Christ's favour, but there was a lack of appreciation. Their hearts were not in a proper state; hence the conditions for faith were not in them. They would not believe even if one arose from the dead. However much their intellect might be convinced, as long as they did not give their affections and yield their wills, they could not believe. But those who did God's will recognized in Christ's word the truth of God. (John 7 : 17). They were in sympathy with God, and recognized that which came from him; they were in harmony with spiritual truth, and recognized it as by intuition. "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8 : 47). Being opposed to the truth, the Pharisees rejected Christ because he

spoke that truth. "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8 : 45). There is, then, a state of heart that is in sympathy with spiritual truth, has a real affinity for it, and readily recognizes and eagerly seizes that truth. And there is, also, a state of heart that is hostile to this truth; and so long as the heart remains in that state, no amount of argument or persuasion, no miracles, no angels from heaven, can produce faith in it. Faith is a moral act, and the will has much to do with it. Some men will not believe. They may claim that they cannot believe, and that is true so long as their affections and wills are perverted. But sin has brought them into that state; hence they are responsible for it. Men are responsible for their faith so far as it is a purely moral act. If they are unwilling to be brought into such a relation to truth and to God that they can believe, then they alone are to blame for their unbelief. But every one who loves the truth and ardently seeks it, has in Christ's teachings the guarantee that he shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth. Those who claim that they are not responsible for their religious faith, make the mistake of regarding that faith as a matter of mathematical demonstration, not as a matter dependent on the inclinations and will, which is really the case.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RECOGNITION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE VISIBLE CHURCH AND IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

NO evangelical Christian will question the statement, that all true believers, and believers only, constitute the spiritual brotherhood. But faith is an internal act; and though its nature is such that it must manifest itself in works, yet its manifestation may be so imperfect that it is not distinctly recognized, or that may be taken for a manifestation of faith which, in reality, is not. How then shall we know believers? What are the marks of Christian recognition? And on what conditions shall men be recognized as members of this brotherhood? We might give the conditions required by the different denominations of those who want to join them. But this would not help us, since the question is not, What are the conditions of recognition by the denominations? but, What are the conditions for recognition in the spiritual brotherhood? The existence of so many different denominations, some of which claim that they only are truly Christian, serves only to increase the difficulty. The problem could easily be solved if we could take a denomination as the Christian society. But this cannot be done. If what we call the Church embraced only Christians and all of them, then it

would be synonymous with Christian society. But there are in the visible Church, whether the term be limited to a single denomination or includes all denominations, many who are not members of the spiritual organism. Even among the twelve there was a Judas. No church, however strict and severe its discipline, is free from tares. Even the Donatists and Moravians are no more an exception to this rule than was the Apostolic Church. And may there not be some that belong to the spiritual brotherhood, who are not in the visible Church? As a rule, wherever it is possible, believers will unite with Christ's visible Church. But there may be circumstances which make such a union impossible. We can well imagine cases in which genuine believers would be deprived of union with other believers in a visible church. Suppose that an unconverted man, who had been taught the Gospel in his childhood, were cast on an uninhabited island or among the heathen, and were then converted; though there would be no visible church with which to unite, he would nevertheless belong to the spiritual brotherhood. And we can well see, too, how, with the errors of individuals and the mistakes of churches, some who are truly members of the spiritual organism may be prevented from uniting with any denomination. A church in a place may be so exclusive or corrupt as to exclude many who are truly spiritual. Huss and others were excommunicated from the visible Church, but that did not sever them from Christ. And no human power can exclude from the spiritual family those who belong to it.

The spiritual family is thus smaller than the visible Church, since it does not include all who belong to

that Church. And it is very probable that Christianity is not confined to the churches, but that there are members of this family who are not in the visible Church.

We might be aided materially in the recognition of the members of this society, if the expression, "the invisible Church," presented a tangible object. It embraces all Christians, and them only. Julius Müller says: "The invisible Church is the union of all who are united to Christ by a living faith." It is, therefore, synonymous with Christian society. But, unfortunately, we have no better criteria for determining who the members of the invisible Church are, than we have for determining who the members of Christian society are. Therefore, the idea of the invisible Church does not help us.

We are obliged to acknowledge that it cannot in every case be determined with certainty who belongs to the spiritual brotherhood. A man may know for himself whether he belongs to it; but he has no outward criteria which make his judgment respecting others infallible. While the conditions of membership are clearly stated in Scripture, we cannot always tell whether these conditions are complied with, because we cannot see the hearts of men. In the vast majority of cases there is no doubt as to the relation men sustain to the society. Their lives settle the question. But in other cases the question is in serious doubt.

The relation of Christian society to the visible Church, which has already been referred to, is an important but also an exceedingly difficult subject. It ought, of course, to be the aim of the Church to em-

brace within its folds all the members of Christian society, and these only. But it has already been shown that this is not the case. It is, therefore, evident that membership in the Church does not constitute membership in Christian society, and *vice versâ*. The test of membership is not the same, therefore, in the visible Church as it is in Christian society. We want to examine the condition of membership in the Church, and also in Christian society.

That the creeds of the different denominations are, as a rule, not fit tests of membership in those denominations, is already quite generally recognized. And this conviction is growing. As a general thing, these creeds are too long and embrace too much. Some of them are also antiquated in their expressions, so that in some cases the exact meaning is exceedingly difficult. In some of the creeds there are points so obscure that the most candid and most scholarly minds differ honestly as to their meaning. Now, it is evident that the condition of membership in the Christian Church should be such that all Christians can comprehend it, the illiterate as well as the learned. The creeds, too, as a rule, were prepared for special occasions, and were adapted to the circumstances that called them forth; but they are not so well adapted to all other times and circumstances. This is especially applicable to the creeds produced during and since the Reformation.

The churches themselves, as a general rule, recognize the fact that their creeds are not fit to be the absolute condition of membership; and whatever their theory may be, they do not practically make

them the condition. If the creed were made such a condition, then only those could be members of the Church who thoroughly understand and adopt the creed according to its original import. Then all would have to understand the creed exactly alike, and believe alike on all its articles. This would make the faith of a church extremely mechanical. But we know that into evangelical churches many persons are received as members who have not so much as read the creed of the Church, and therefore cannot know its contents. In practice, therefore, the acceptance of the creed is not the condition of membership. But it is also evident that in the same denomination there is often great difference of opinion respecting the doctrines taught in different articles of the creed. In the Lutheran Church, the different parties which adopt unconditionally the same creed differ widely on some of the articles of that creed, and fierce disputes prevail among them on those articles. The Episcopal Church embraces in its fold members who differ doctrinally far more than many members of entirely different denominations differ from one another. Its High and Low churchmen are a striking illustration of the great differences that may exist among men who profess to adopt the same creed. The same may be said of Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, and other churches. In all there are multitudes who do not know what the confession teaches on some points, and therefore they cannot be said really to adopt that confession. This is another conclusive proof that, practically, the acceptance of the confession of a church is not the condition of membership. In other words, the theoretical creed

of a church is not its creed practically, which is the same as saying that it is not its creed at all.

This difference between the theoretical and the practical creed produces a confused state of affairs, and puts the Church in an unfavourable light before the world, so that it is liable to the charge of hypocrisy. All this is glaring and sad enough; but where is the remedy?

A Christian church has no right to fix arbitrarily its conditions of membership. Those conditions must be in harmony with the Gospel, otherwise the church that makes them cannot rightly claim to be Christian. This all will admit. But to say that the conditions must be Scriptural, does not define them sufficiently. If by any process all the doctrines of Scripture could be embodied in a creed, we should then have the most complete creed possible, or we should have a complete system of Biblical dogmatics as the creed. Would not the adoption of such a creed be the most suitable condition of church membership? If this were made the condition, then only those who are the farthest advanced doctrinally could be received, and they only when they have mastered the whole of Biblical dogmatics; but those who are just beginning their Christian life, and, in fact, the vast majority of Christians, would have to be excluded. The question is, Whether any Christian church has a right to make such conditions of membership as will exclude any one from its fellowship whom Christ recognizes as his disciple? The Church, if true to its ideal, must not exclude any whom Christ does not exclude. If a church does reject any whom Christ accepts, then it, in so far, does not carry on the work of Christ, but

actually opposes it. So far as it rejects one of Christ's followers it is Antichrist. The Church, however, is to be like Christ; it is to be the representative and executor of his will on earth; its acts, therefore, should, as far as possible, be those of Christ himself. This is the ideal; but it is evident that thus far the reality has not corresponded with this ideal. Church order and organization must be maintained; but with the present conflicting views of Christians, it is difficult to do this if all Christ's followers are admitted to church-fellowship. The existing differences in faith and ceremony and practice seem to make it impossible at once to realize this ideal. Even if attempted, the result would, in many cases, be chaos instead of order, and interminable disputes instead of harmony. But this ideal is ever to be kept in view; and the aim should constantly be to make room in the Church for every one whom Christ recognizes as a follower. Very generally the tendency has been away from this ideal. For greater effort has been made to exclude all who did not believe just as the particular church did, than to include all believers. Some are very careful to exclude all non-believers; but the admission of all believers to church-fellowship is just as essential as the exclusion of non-believers. Where the different denominations are represented, there may be no difficulty for believers in finding a suitable church home. But where this is not the case, true Christians may be deprived of the blessings of church-fellowship.

If it is acknowledged that the Church ought to exclude none whom Christ accepts, then this very principle determines the character of the confession which

should be made the condition of membership in the Church. That confession must not contain the *maximum* of Scripture doctrines, which only those can receive who have the most perfectly developed faith; but it must contain only so much doctrine as *must* be believed by every one in order to be a Christian. This *minimum* is the reception of Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures. It must be remembered that the Church is a school; that its members are learners; and that many pupils must begin with the very alphabet of religion. The willing learners Christ receives, if they but come to him, however ignorant and immature they may be. And, surely, whatever is sufficient to make a man acceptable to Christ ought also to be sufficient to make him acceptable to the Church.

If it is objected that in this way some will be admitted into the Church who are unworthy, we need only ask, Whether, under the system now generally adopted, many are not admitted who are unworthy? No church discipline or condition of membership has ever yet prevented the growth of tares among the wheat, and none ever will. We are not responsible for what is unavoidable, but we are responsible for excluding from the Church true followers of Christ by adopting such conditions of membership as will necessarily exclude them. What right has any church to make a platform for its members to stand on broader than that made by Christ? And what right has the Church of Christ to make a platform narrower than that which he himself has made?

If, however, this principle is adopted, will it not prevent the progress of the Church in doctrine?

Will not the tendency be to make the members satisfied with the attainment of this minimum of doctrine? Not necessarily any more than this is the case now, and, certainly, not at all if they are truly believers. The tendency of the present method, in which there is a glaring conflict between the theoretical and practical condition of membership, is rather calculated to depreciate doctrine. The condition of membership is by no means the limit of doctrinal attainment, nor is it the ultimate aim. It is only the point on which all believers must agree, and from which all must start, not the goal to be reached at the end of the course. This minimum is the seed, which is to be developed unto perfection. And the confession that contains all the doctrines of Scripture in their purity, is the goal to be aimed at in the doctrinal development of the membership. This, after all, is what the creeds of the churches at best amount to now—they are not the starting-point, but the goal—that is, they are the ideal, not the real creed. The acceptance of the whole system of divinity might be made the aim of the Church's teachings.

With respect to creeds, the churches are evidently in a transition state. The old is not satisfactory; but just what to substitute for it cannot so easily be decided. As in all transition periods, there are two extremes now—those who oppose all change, and tenaciously cling to the old because it is old; and those who thoughtlessly reject the old simply because it is old. True progress consists in the conservation of the true, however old, and the addition thereto of newly-discovered truth, and the adaptation of both the old and the new to the present needs.

However difficult it may be in this transition period for any denomination to welcome to its fold all who are truly Christians, we must be careful not to model the conditions of recognition in the spiritual brotherhood after those of a denomination. As Christian society is different from any denomination, and also different from the whole visible Church, so must the conditions of recognition be different. To whatever church the Christian belongs, if it excludes from fellowship any true followers of Christ, he must imitate Christ, and recognize as brethren those whom Christ recognizes. Christian fellowship must not, therefore, be limited by denominational fellowship. But the failure of a church to come up to the Gospel standard in its conditions of membership is not to lead to an unconditional rejection of that church, but rather to greater effort within the church to bring it, in this respect, to a full imitation of its Lord. Evidently, the most perfect church is that one which imitates him most perfectly.

While the Christian is to recognize every follower of Christ, as far as possible, as a Christian brother, he should be careful to distinguish between true discipleship and mere profession. The evidence that one is a true disciple, is twofold—that of profession and that of the life. But, as already intimated, however desirous we may be to recognize as spiritual brethren only Christians and all Christians, we must not forget that we are liable to recognize some who are not brethren in Christ, and to fail to recognize others who are. God only, who sees the heart, can decide, in every case, with absolute certainty. Membership in the Christian society does not, however, depend on

human recognition, but on the recognition of Christ. He knows his own, and they know him. "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10 : 14). "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2 : 19). If we must err, then it is better to recognize some as brethren who are not, than to fail to recognize any that are brethren.

While the visible Church and the spiritual organism are not the same, and while the conditions of recognition are different, Christian society must not ignore or slight the Church. The spiritual brotherhood has its home in the Church, and is the real Church. If it denies the Church, it denies itself and the mother that has nurtured and still supports it. The zealous member of Christian society will spare no pains to promote the purity and efficiency of the Church, and he will find this the true, and perhaps the only way of promoting the welfare of Christian society. He may oppose the spirit of sectarianism ; he may regret the fact of denominationalism ; but he cannot be an enemy of the Church. While labouring earnestly to make the Church and Christian society one and the same, he can give creeds their proper place, and value them very highly. And with the existing order of things, he can live for the promotion of the universal Church of Christ, and yet belong to a denomination, prefer it to all others, and in and through that very denomination labour most efficiently for the kingdom of God at large. So a man may prefer his own family to any other, and yet labour faithfully for the welfare of the community at large ; and a man may be a patriot, and prefer his

own land to any other, and yet seek the interest and welfare of the whole human family. God gives each one a sphere, and it is necessarily limited ; in and through that sphere, and not otherwise, can he work for the good of all. A man may be denominational, without being bigoted ; he may be churchly, without being sectarian. But if he is an intelligent follower of Christ, he will place the Church above the denomination, and will distinguish between the visible Church and the spiritual brotherhood.

The member of the spiritual organism thus owes it to every Church of Christ to recognize it as such. But he, on the other hand, also has the right to claim recognition from every Christian Church as a disciple of Christ. In a certain sense, Christians may say that they are of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas ; but they must still more, and above all, be of Christ; and if they are, then they must not refuse to recognize one another as of Christ. But while Christ's follower has a right to claim this recognition, he has no right to demand that in matters of secondary importance, or of indifference (*adiaphora*), a church shall yield to his wishes or opinion. Where conscience is not involved, he may have to yield to the majority, as in questions of expediency, of Church government, forms of worship, and the like. Self-will, obstinacy, and a rebellious spirit are unbecoming. His right to recognition does not imply the right to lord it over God's heritage.

NOTE.—Some of the views above given will, of course, meet with opposition. It will be objected that the recognition of Christ alone is not enough for the organization of the Church and its protection against dangerous heresies. The doctrine respecting Christ must,

indeed, be defined, otherwise it would be too loose as the creed of the Church. But it cannot be successfully disputed that the creed of the Church ought to be confined strictly to the fundamental doctrines. All these, and these only, should constitute the creed of a church. While this fact is recognized by many, it is not yet, as a rule, made the law in the various denominations. There seems to be a fear that the adoption of such a principle in the constitution of a denomination would be too revolutionary in its character. The General Synod of the Lutheran Church, however, recognizes the fact that its Confession (the Augsburg Confession) contains both fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, and it obligates only to fundamentals, thus recognizing in its constitution what many individuals in the various denominations recognize.

The Gospel makes the relation of believers to Christ chiefly personal; the churches, in theory at least, make this relation chiefly doctrinal. Christ welcomes all who have spiritual hunger and thirst. The first disciples he calls are to follow him—that is, they are to be hearers of his word and witnesses of his works; in other words, they are to be learners. All who were willing to follow and to learn were made the recipients of his blessings, even if they did not fully understand him. He illustrated in his life his words: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Many whom he healed and otherwise blessed could know but little of his person, his relations, his work, and his future. His chosen disciples were often very obtuse intellectually, and much that he had to say to them they could not understand. It is, indeed, true that his relation to his disciples till the Day of Pentecost was of a preparatory character; but should not the relation to Christ which is of a preparatory character be more fully recognized now? But after the Day of Pentecost, just as before, the relation of the believer to Christ is of a more personal character than is now generally recognized. From the whole New Testament it is evident that Christ is far more merciful than many who bear his name.

The view that the churches ought to accept all whom Christ accepts, is becoming very general. It is held by some even who profess to be strictly Calvinistic and churchly, and who cannot be charged with latitudinarian views. Dr. Hodge said at the Evangelical Alliance at New York: "No man should be ex-

cluded from the Church whom Christ would not exclude from heaven." Dr. Skinner said at the dedication of the Second Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati: "As to the conditions of church-membership among us and the terms of communion, we strenuously hold that any person who can be admitted into heaven can have a place in our Church. We put no barriers before the door of the Church which we do not find before the gates of Paradise. Simple, hearty faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will save anybody, and secure an inheritance with him of everlasting glory; so, as we cannot search the heart, a credible, a sincere, and open profession of such faith in Christ unites a person to our Church, and makes him a partaker in all the rights, privileges, promises, and blessings of the Presbyterian Church. All barriers are broken down to professing believers, and the Christian Church welcome is extended to all such. We impose no pledges as to things outside the Bible; we impose no creeds, for we regard all new-comers as beginners in religion, 'babes in Christ,' and we believe that the Spirit of grace who has made them Christians is the Spirit of truth, by whom they will grow in the knowledge of Christ and his truth as they grow in years. And, moreover, such a profession makes the person a member of the one catholic Church of God on earth, from any branch of which he may not rightfully be excluded, and all who, in any branch, have made such a profession have full and equal rights to the table of the Lord in our Church."

At the meeting of the Congregational Council of Connecticut, in 1874, it was suggested by a committee that those churches which are weak (weak in the sense of dependence on home missionary aid), should, if necessary, revise their formularies, and so amend them as not to exclude by means of them any who give satisfactory evidence of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Dr. Bacon's letter in the *Independent*, Dec. 24th, 1874.) Speaking of creeds and confessions, Dr. B. says that the Protestant confessions are tests for ministers, not for the reception of members. Practically this is the case; but then the confession is only the creed of the ministers, not of the church; it expresses, not what the church believes, but the doctrinal goal to which the minister, if possible, is to bring the church. Speaking of Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other churches, he says; "At present I only call attention to the fact that in

none of these ecclesiastical organizations is a church-member required, at his admission, to profess that the doctrinal formulary which the Church has framed or adopted for itself is the confession of his personal faith. Even in the Presbyterian Church, with all the rigour of its Calvinism, no profession of Calvinism is required as a preliminary of admission to full communion and to all the privileges of membership." All this shows that the theoretical is not the practical, the ideal is not the real creed of the Church, and a man may be a member of an Episcopal church without being an Episcopalian; of a Presbyterian church without being a Presbyterian; of a Methodist church without being a Methodist. Suppose now that a Presbyterian church is organized with one hundred members, all of whom are admitted on the liberal basis indicated above, without making any confession of Calvinism; in what sense is that a Presbyterian church? And suppose that in their doctrinal development they never accept Calvinism, why should it still be called Presbyterian? Is it really Presbyterian in any other sense than that its government is Presbyterial? In that sense, a Unitarian or Universalist church might also be Presbyterian.

That the same creed has been differently interpreted in the same church is well known. Even now an effort is made to prove that the Westminster Confession does not contain the strict Calvinism which Dr. Hodge and others find in it. (See the recent work of Prof. John Forbes, D.D., of Aberdeen, on "Predestination and Freewill and the Westminster Confession of Faith.") It is evident that so long as there is dispute as to the very sense of a confession, the subscription to that confession can only be conditional. If two men subscribe the same confession, but interpret it differently, it is evident that, in spite of their subscription, that confession is not the creed of both men. To require of men an unconditional subscription to a confession which they do not fully understand, or about whose sense there is dispute, is an outrage that should be impossible in churches which were born in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. To require such a subscription may promote hypocrisy, but not Christian faith.

In Europe, as well as in America, the conviction is growing that the creeds should be revised, or else that only a conditional subscription to them should be required. This conviction is quite general in Germany. Even in Calvinistic Scotland there

are voices that oppose the unconditional authority of the creed. Rev. David Macrae, formerly of the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley, has advocated a revision of the standards, and declared that "the spectacle of a Church professing to hold all these articles as articles of faith, while holding many of them as only matters of opinion, and not holding some of them at all, is a bad example to the world and demoralizing to the Church herself. The continued timidity of the Church in dealing with her standards in view of these facts is becoming discreditable to her faith in the abiding presence of God's Spirit; is a policy of unfaithfulness to the truth, and a policy that would be by no party more condemned than by the men who framed these standards according to the light they had, and by the Reformers whose creed has been preserved, but whose prompt and fearless loyalty to truth has been to a large extent lost."

With respect to creeds, the Church, as stated above, is in a transition period. There has been much agitation on the subject of the authority of creeds, and the end is not yet. To change the standards which are historical, which have been revered for centuries, and around which so many hallowed associations cluster, is no easy matter. While on the subject of human creeds Christian liberty is the demand of the hour, care must be taken that lawlessness be not mistaken for liberty, and that no changes be made by irreverent hands.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNITY OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

CONFUSED and erroneous views prevail on this subject, simply because there is no clear conception of the difference between real spiritual unity and visible external union. Owing to the lack of clear distinctions, the real unity of Christ's followers, one of the plainest doctrines of the New Testament, is ignored by many. At religious conferences, in papers, pamphlets, and books, it is common to speak of the desirableness of the unity of all Christians, and to lament the lack of this unity. That this unity does not exist is regarded as so evident that it needs no proof. And not a few are zealous to bring about this desirable unity. When such views prevail among Christians, it is no wonder that the world sees only the divisions of the visible Church, without recognizing the oneness of Christian Society. These widespread misapprehensions make a careful investigation of the subject necessary. For Christian Sociology this is especially important, since we can have no correct idea of that science without understanding the relation of Christians to one another. As it is now, the members of the same congregation perhaps recognize certain ties which unite them, and the members of an entire denomination may also recognize some bonds of union

which make them one. But, as a rule, even the bonds which unite the members of a congregation or denomination are not well understood, and much less those which unite all believers and make them one spiritual family of God.

The islands of the sea are only superficially separated from the mainland and from one another; beneath the water their union, though invisible, is perfect. The same is true of Christians. Superficially and externally they may be separated; but there is a deep, internal, spiritual bond of union, which makes them one. This oneness is of such a character that it depends on no external relation or recognition, just as a man's connection with the human family depends on no such relation or recognition. The unity of Christians is not of their creation. Whether they know it or not, whether they desire it or not, they are one and cannot help being one. The ground of this unity is in the relation of believers to Christ, and through him to the Father. This it is which constitutes them one family. Even if one does not know his relations, or if he disowns them, that does not interfere with the reality of the relationship itself. That relationship is an established fact, with which choice and recognition have nothing to do. This is true of spiritual as well as of natural relationship. If the Pope is a Christian, and excommunicates and anathematizes you as a heretic; and if you are also a Christian, but denounce him as Antichrist; then the Pope and you are, nevertheless, brethren. The relation of brothers is real in this case, though unrecognized; and nothing can destroy that relation except the departure of one or both from Christ. But how

explain the anathema and the Antichrist? They can be explained only on the ground of human errors and failings. Brothers may quarrel and be brothers still.

On the subject of the unity of Christians, the testimony of Scripture is, of course, decisive. This testimony is strong and unmistakable. We have already seen that Christ came to establish a spiritual kingdom, which is sometimes called the kingdom of God, sometimes the kingdom of heaven, and sometimes he calls it "my kingdom." He himself is the King, the Messiah; his followers are the subjects of this kingdom. Now, the very idea of a kingdom is that of union under one head. As his kingdom is not of this world, Christ and his followers form one spiritual kingdom among the many temporal kingdoms of this world. With one king over all, namely, Jesus Christ; with one life-giving and sanctifying power, the Holy Spirit; with one law for all, the Gospel; with the same principle controlling all, namely, love—this kingdom must be one, though it consists of many persons. The notion that there are various kingdoms of God on earth is at variance with the Gospel idea of that kingdom.

In a number of his parables, Jesus illustrates the nature of this kingdom, showing by natural similitudes what it is like. For this reason he so often begins his parables with the words, "The kingdom of heaven is like" or "is likened unto." All these parables imply that Christians are one; for these parables illustrate but one and the same kingdom. But some of them bring out this idea more fully than others. This unity is specially prominent in the parables of the mustard-seed and of the leaven (Matt.

13 : 31–33). According to the parable of the leaven, the same power works in all Christians, leavening, transforming them, and thus distinguishing them from the world, the unleavened meal. The same power working in all, and the same spiritual life and energy permeating and energizing all, form a bond that unites them. It is an inner bond, but that makes it all the more real and strong. In the other parable the idea of Christian unity is presented in a different light. The parable of the grain of mustard-seed represents the kingdom of God as a growth, thus bringing out the idea of unity from its beginning, and through every stage of development, to the end. According to this parable, the Christians of any period of time, and all over the world, are none. They are also connected with all the Christians of the past; and the Christians of the future will be connected with all who have preceded them. Thus, Christians are represented as a living organism, all the parts of which are intimately connected.

The same idea, but under a different figure, is found in Christ's farewell address (John 15 : 1–8). Here, too, Christians are represented as an organism, but with the explanatory thought that Christ is the bond of union and the life of the organism, on which life everything depends. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." The vine with its branches is an organic unity. All the branches inhere in one and the same vine, forming together a living whole—that is, all Christians inhere in Christ, and with him, the unifying power, they form a living unity. The same sap flows through all the branches—namely, the sap of the vine; that is, the life from Christ, or Christ's

life, is the life of all his disciples. All Christians must bear the same kind of fruit, namely, that which Christ works through them; just as all the branches must bear the same kind of fruit, that of the vine. When the branch becomes fruitless, and then only, its connection with the vine is severed; or rather, the branch is fruitless because its living connection with the vine has already been severed. Vital union with Christ is the condition for fruit-bearing; those whose connection is not vital are cut off as dead branches. The whole allegory is worthy of profound study in this connection, since it throws much light on the subject of Christian unity.

Repeatedly the Gospel represents Christians as forming one fold. The most conspicuous instance is in the 10th chapter of John. Christ here calls himself the good shepherd, and his followers are his flock. The unity here taught is not destroyed by the fact that, in the 16th verse, he says that he has other sheep "which are not of this fold." By this are meant the heathen, who were not yet in the fold, but who should be brought into it, so that "there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

The followers of Christ are disciples, learners. They form a school, with Christ as the teacher of all, and with the same instruction for all. But a better idea of this unity is found in those passages which represent Christ and his followers as a family.* These passages also indicate the nature of this unity —namely, as spiritual; and they indicate its basis. "Whosoever shall do the will of my father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and

* Matt. 12 : 46–50; Mark 3 : 31–35; Luke 8 : 19–21.

mother." To these must be added all those passages which speak of God as the Father, and of Christians as his children, in all of which is found the idea of a family. See especially John 11 : 51, 52, where the saying of the high priest is viewed as a prophecy, "that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together *in one* the children of God that are scattered abroad." To this family union of Christians we give expression whenever we pray, "Our Father who art in heaven."

In John 17 : 21, Jesus prays for his disciples, "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This passage, viewed superficially, seems to imply that there is no necessary and inherent unity among Christians, and in this sense it is frequently quoted. But this is not the meaning of the passage. The unity between Christ and the Father is the most perfect possible. Christ here prays that his disciples, and all who shall believe on him through their word, may constitute as perfect a union as that of the Father and the Son. Christian unity has degrees, according to the development of those qualities in Christians which unite them. The disciples were still imperfect. They had not yet received the gift of the Holy Spirit. As they grew in knowledge and in grace, and when they received the Spirit, their unity became more perfect. Christian growth is a growth in Christ and in the Father ; and this is a growth in unity. The more perfect Christians are, the more is their unity like that of the Father and the Son. Properly under-

stood, therefore, this passage does not deny the existence of Christian unity; but it is a prayer for its growth and perfection. The passage (21–23) teaches an essential element in Christian unity—namely, that it is a unity in Christ and the Father, "that they also may be one in us;" "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." From this it is evident that he prays for the perfection of their unity. In the 22nd verse, Jesus says that he gave his disciples the glory which the Father gave him—that is, he gave them the privilege of being God's children and heirs of glory. But why was this glory given? The answer is, "That they may be one, even as we are one." This glory, then, makes them one. The inference is that all who are God's children and partakers of Christ's glory are one. There is another fact connected with this passage which must not be overlooked. Jesus, in this prayer, does not refer merely to the inner, spiritual unity of Christians, but also to their visible union. For it is a union which the world is to see; and in it the world is to have an evidence that the Father sent the Son and that he loves Christians as he loves the Son. Let us look at the passage. Christ prays, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; *and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*" Here, then, we have a prayer of the Saviour for the perfection of Christian

unity, and also that this unity may be visible to the world. The spiritual growth of Christians is also a growth in unity; and the growth of inner Christian unity is also a growth in the visible manifestion of this unity to the world.

The teaching of Jesus on this subject is unmistakably clear; but that of the apostles, in the Epistles, is equally so. Paul's favourite figure for the Church is that of the body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12 : 4, 5).* In Eph. 1 : 22, 23, and Col. 1 : 24, the Church is called the body of Christ; and in Col. 1 : 18, simply the body. Now, as the body is one, so are all Christians one. As all the members are united in one body, so also are Christians intimately connected with one another. Christ's figure of the vine and the branches, and Paul's figure of the body, teach essentially the same truth respecting Christian unity; and both represent this unity under the figure of an organism. In 1 Cor. 12, this figure of the body is considered at length, and from it important lessons are drawn. The body is one, and yet it is a multiplicity. That is, there is diversity in unity, different members in one body; and unity in diversity, one body in which all the members inhere. The apostle closes his argument on the unity and diversity of Christians thus: "Now, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." And in Eph. 4 : 25, he calls Christians "members one of another."

* See also 1 Cor. 10 : 17, and nearly the whole of the twelfth chapter; Eph. 4 : 4, 15, 16, 25; Eph. 5 : 30; Col. 2 : 19.

The unity of believers is so clearly and strikingly set forth in these passages, and the application of the term *spiritual organism* to this unity is so fully justified by them, that other passages on the subject need not be considered at length. As confirmatory of the view presented, the following may be referred to: Toward the close of Gal. 3, and frequently, Christians are called children of God, and they are also frequently called brethren; the idea being that of union in one family. They are represented* as those who have put on Christ and are united in him to one another: "for ye are all *one* in Christ." The idea of unity under the figures of a state and a family is found in Eph. 2: 19, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." And repeatedly the same idea is represented under the figure of a building.†

The passages referred to above do not merely teach the fact that there is Christian unity, but also its nature. Were Christians only externally, or loosely, or nominally united, then their union would have little or no significance. The passages which teach the fact of this union also show that it is deep, internal, spiritual, and intimate. Different figures bring out different aspects of the nature of this union. That of the kingdom brings out the idea that Christians are subjects of one king, and under one law, and that they are fellow-citizens; that of the school brings out the idea that they are all learners, and that Christ is the teacher; that of the flock represents them as under

* Gal. 3: 27, 28.

† 1 Cor. 3: 9; Eph. 2: 20-22; 1 Pet. 2: 4, 5.

the loving care of Christ, the shepherd, who protects and nourishes them ; that of the vine and branches represents them as united in Christ, from whom they draw their life ; that of the body shows their organic union with one another ; and their dependence on one another ; and the figure of the family brings out the idea of their relation to God as their Father, to Jesus as the elder brother, and to one another as brothers and sisters. Stronger expressions could not, in fact, be used to show that the union of Christians is most intimate and living. The bonds of this union are the most perfect ; and the union itself will be perfect as these bonds prevail. Growth in that which is Christian is also a growth in the perfection of Christian unity. These bonds of union are Christ, the Father, the Spirit, the truth, the Christian graces, one aim, one work, one home—in fact, everything that is common to believers is also a bond of union between them.

With such prominence given to the subject in the New Testament, it is strange that this existing unity of Christians is not more generally recognized. In the Early Church, while Christians were yet more distinct from the world, and before they were divided into numerous opposing factions, there was a vivid consciousness of the oneness of Christ's followers. This found expression in the third article of the Apostles' Creed. Gradually, and in harmony with the general materializing tendencies, the inner, spiritual unity of Christians became less prominent, and an external, visible union, under the Bishop of Rome, took its place. Sight took the place of faith, just as the Pope took the place of Christ. And the Church that was believed in was the visible Roman Catholic

Church, not that Church which is is invisible except to the eye of faith. The Catholic Church recognizes the unity of Christians; but it is simply the unity of the Roman Catholic Church. This view was opposed by the forerunners of the Reformation, who advocated a more spiritual view of the Church, especially by John Huss. Zwingli advocated the doctrine of an invisible church, which is the same as Christian society and must be one. All the reformers recognize the fact of the real unity of Christians. The Seventh Article of the Augsburg Confession gives their view of "the one holy Christian Church" as "the congregation of believers." Now this unity of Christians is, indeed, recognized in works on dogmatics; but practically it is not fully recognized, and frequently it is spoken of as something yet to be established. And, failing to recognize the real spiritual unity of Christians, some seek unity in Romanism; others go about to establish Christian unity; while others have confused notions on the subject and do not know what to make of it.

Even when the union of Christians is recognized, its nature is frequently misunderstood. Many speak of the *organic union* of Christians as something that is very desirable, but does not exist. If there is any union, therefore, it must be inorganic. Now, it is true that in the literal and material sense there is no organic Christian union. But by transferring the language from its material to a spiritual sense, we can find no better expression to indicate Christian unity than that of an organism. This unity *is* organic; of course, the word must be taken in a spiritual sense, as indicating that the union of the members in one body

is a living union. In this sense Christian union is organic, and cannot be otherwise. Were the union not organic, then some of the most striking figures of Scripture, which teach this unity, are calculated to mislead. Between Christians and Christ there is a vital union; in him, therefore, believers form a living body—a living, spiritual organism.

But while the unity of Christians is organic, it is not visible; just as that between the Father and the Son is not visible. As the bonds of Christian union are inner and spiritual, the world cannot see them, except in their effects. If all Christians could be brought together into one harmonious assembly, the spectacle would, indeed, be imposing; in that, however, the world would not see the unity of believers, but only one of its manifestations or evidences. And now, with all the external divisions among Christians, their unity must be evident from their lives. All true disciples of Christ have and manifest his spirit; and in their faith in Christ, in its profession and manifestation in life, they exhibit to the world their oneness in Christ. When Christians are a peculiar people, zealous of good works, their peculiarity and zeal and good works prove their unity. In some way every Christian must mirror Christ and reflect his image on the world. But the lives of Christians, like the faith whence they spring, are imperfect; and for this reason Christian unity is imperfectly seen in their lives.

All efforts to promote the oneness of believers must and ought to fail if they do not recognize the existing organic, spiritual unity of Christians, and if they seek other means of promoting it than by spiritual

progress. The great need now is not the creation of this unity, but the recognition of its existence, its development, and its visible manifestation in its effects. Men cannot create it ; Christ is its author. Conventions can promote it only so far as they promote living Christianity. Men only show what pitiable views they have of it when they try to make this union by means of outward appliances and mere uniformity of ceremonies, or by adopting the same name and the same form of government. Unions of that kind have repeatedly proved failures in Europe, especially in Germany, as well as in America. In such cases the outer was taken for the inner, and the seeming for real union ; and the result has often been more dissension and more real divisions. From the Reformation to the present time this lesson has been taught frequently and forcibly ; and it is time to heed the lesson. This unity is not a mechanism, nor is it patchwork ; it consists not in uniformity, nor in subscription to the same creed ; it is a spiritual creation, a growth from within, a seamless garment, not woven by man's hand, folded by Christ around himself.

Christian society, then, is one exactly in proportion as it is Christian. This fact must be recognized and must be made the basis of all real unionistic efforts. But this inner, spiritual union is to outward, visible union what faith is to works. It is not enough to have faith ; the faith must manifest itself in the life. And the growth of living faith is the best means of promoting the Christian life. So it is not enough that Christians form a spiritual union ; that union is to find such expression that Christ's prayer may be answered, and that the world may see that they are

one. And with the Scriptural view of Christian unity deeply impressed on his mind, the believer hails with joy every proper effort to develop it, and participates in all laudable means to give this unity full expression and visible form. But these efforts must be substantial, on, and in, and by means of, the truth; not sickly sentimentalism, whose result, if not positively injurious, is empty show, instead of solid reality.

The external divisions of the Protestant Church are often unfavourably contrasted with the visible union of the Roman Catholic Church. As far as external organization is concerned, the latter has a decided advantage. To those whose faith depends on seeing and touching, this union is specially imposing and attractive. As a rule, men exalt a mere form in proportion as they lose the spirit. In our day this law is very effective, and has many striking illustrations. But he that looks beneath the surface, and can believe without seeing, is convinced that the inner, spiritual oneness of evangelical Christians is far more real and perfect than the external union formed by a visible head, the Pope, and by the same government, discipline, and ceremonies. It is evident that the boasted oneness of the Catholic Church is largely external, and is rather uniformity than unity. Yet this union is power, because one visible head governs the whole body. Compare with this the real inner oneness of Christians, oneness in Christ as of branches in a vine or of members in a body, and the great superiority of the latter over the former will appear. Romanism lays the stress on works, and is external and ceremonial. Protestantism lays the stress on faith, and is inner and spiritual, too often, however, forget-

ing the work-element of faith. Consequently, the union of the former is more visible, but that of the latter is deeper and more real. But the evident mission of evangelical Christianity is to make its spiritual unity as manifest and as perfect, in outward organization, as is the visible union of Romanism, or still more perfect, if possible. Romanism may yet teach the Protestant churches the necessity of this outward organization for defensive, if not for aggressive, movements. That they have not yet learned it from the ravages of materialism is inexplicable.

From what has been said, the nature of Christian unity is sufficiently clear. But it seems strange that, with such bonds to unite them, Christians treat one another with such indifference, and practically ignore their oneness. This can be accounted for only on the supposition that pure religion is very weak in them, or that they are ignorant of their relations to their fellow-Christians. If truly Christ's disciples and conscious of these relations, then nothing more is needed to make communion with their fellow-Christians deep and precious, and to create in them a lively interest in all their brethren. No Christian can understand these relations and yet be indifferent to the rest of God's family. Hence the importance of understanding the existing unity of Christ's followers. The realization of this unity is the ground and inspiration of Christian sociability.

No one who has a correct idea of this unity will imagine that, after all, it is purely ideal and without a foundation in reality. In their union with Christ and the Father, Christians are made Christ-like and God-like, so that there is a real likeness between them,

and a oneness of heart and of spirit. They have essentially the same faith and love and hope ; the same disposition, character, inspiration, and aim. These are the aggregating and unifying qualities which make Christians one and Christian society peculiar: The spirit that controls it is different from that which controls the world. And this Christian spirit does not merely govern the society in the aggregate, but it is also the controlling spirit of every member. This oneness of spirit enables Christians to understand, sympathize with, and help one another, as they could not do otherwise, and as the world cannot do. While there is great variety in the degrees of Christian experience, in kind it is essentially alike. The similarity of Christian experience is the ground of Christian sympathy ; and the diversity is also important, since it enables the one to supply what the other lacks.

From the discussion of this subject it is evident that the Christian family is a spiritual unit. And as spiritual relationship is higher than the natural, so the spiritual family is more perfect than the natural ; and the members of the former should be more closely united than those of the latter, even in the eyes of the world. The natural family must be broken up ; the spiritual family will never be dissolved. Natural relationship has no right to sever spiritual ties ; but the spiritual relationship may sever natural ties. Jesus himself teaches that spiritual ties are more sacred than the natural (Mat. 12 : 46). If there is a conflict between the natural and the spiritual relations, the former must be sacrificed to the latter. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy

of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." There never can be sufficient ground for separating from the spiritual relationship; but this relationship may "set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." In the Early Church it frequently occurred that entrance into the spiritual family made one hated in his natural family, so that Christ's word was fulfilled: "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." And whenever either earthly or spiritual ties must be severed, there can be no question in the mind of the Christian as to his duty. Whatever the earthly relations or circumstances may be, Christ's command, "Follow thou me," is imperative.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIVERSITY IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

WHILE a living, personal relation to Christ, on the part of the members, is the basis of the unity of Christian society, it must not be supposed that this relation, and the unity resulting therefrom, produce sameness in the members, or uniformity. Unity is not monotony, but it is life that springs from the same principle. Life is diverse; and the higher the life, the greater the diversity. The unity of Christians has its source in the origin of their spiritual life in Christ and in the development of that life through the Spirit which he gives. But as Christ makes truly free (John 8 : 31–36), the development of this life is a development in liberty. And as this life is that of persons, not of things, it cannot be the same in all respects in different persons. In its source and in its constant relation of dependence, it must be alike in all. That is, in all that is fundamental in Christianity and essential to this life Christians must be alike. But since persons differ, and are capable of infinite variety; since they are surrounded by different circumstances, and are subject to different influences; and since Christ is infinite in resources, it cannot be expected that the spiritual life should be exactly the same in all Christians, nor is it desirable that it should

be. While there is, therefore, unity in Christ, there is also diversity in Christian society.

If two persons were exactly alike and subject to exactly the same influences, then we might expect the same results. But no two are alike, nor are any two subject to the same influences. There are differences in the persons themselves; they have physical, mental, emotional, and volitional peculiarities. These constitutional peculiarities are by no means removed by the Gospel; but it adapts itself to them and uses them. But besides these constitutional differences, there are differences in training, in education, and in surroundings. All these tend to produce variety. There is thus already an endless diversity in men before they accept the Gospel. This being the case, the results would necessarily be different even if the same spiritual influences were brought to bear on all. But there is great diversity in these influences themselves. As thus the subjects and the spiritual influences exerted on them differ, the results are, in many respects, diverse. Just as in society in general we find that men are alike only in that which is essential to humanity, while in other respects the variety is endless, so in Christian society we find that the members are alike only in that which is essential to Christianity and which constitutes them Christians, while in other respects there is the greatest diversity. The very nature of the case, as well as the direct teachings of the Gospel, lead us to expect this; and history and observation teach us that it is the case. Nowhere does the Gospel propose to destroy individual peculiarities, so far as they are right; but it proposes to fit itself into them. The Gospel is very adaptable to the various

peculiarities and conditions of men. Paul becomes all things to all men, and in this he was a true representative of the Gospel.

Already in the first disciples there is a striking diversity. This is evident from what is stated of them in the Gospels. In the brief accounts of them there given, the peculiarities of Peter, John, and Thomas are made specially prominent. The writings of the different apostles also differ materially, which cannot altogether be explained by the different occasions and aims of those writings. These differences show clearly that each one had favourite truths on which he liked to dwell, and that each represented particular phases of Christianity and a particular tendency; which facts, however, do not mar their fundamental unity. While the different writers of the New Testament have marked peculiarities, the most prominent ones are found in Peter and Paul and John. They have distinct types of doctrine, around which the other writings may be grouped. Peter has been recognized as the apostle of hope, Paul as the apostle of faith, John as the apostle of love. And the same diversity found in the apostles is found in the Church in all ages. The ages differ, and the men in them differ from one another and from those of other ages. Generally, an age has its favourite truths and peculiar tendencies, while other truths recede into the background, and other tendencies are neglected. The thoughts and interests that engross the attention of one age yield to other thoughts and interests in another age. Ages, like men, have their hobbies. In no age is the Church devoid of all truth, and in no age has it all the truth in perfect symmetry. So rich

is the Gospel that no apostle and no age exhausts it. And for the fullest view of the Gospel, we must not limit our study of its workings to any one age, but must include all the ages. But not only is the Church diverse in different ages, but the Christians of the same age, though, in the main, subject to the same general truths and tendencies, differ. Great diversity may, in fact, appear in those who labour side by side in the same church and in the same cause. We need but mention Luther and Melanchthon, who were so intimately connected socially, intellectually, and spiritually, and were, nevertheless, so different.

To get a clear idea of the diversity prevalent among Christians, we need but examine any Christian congregation. We shall find that some are chiefly emotional, that others are more intellectual, others more practical, and that in others there is such a blending of these elements that it is difficult to tell which predominates. Some cherish one view of Christianity, others another. One is lost in faith, and Paul is his favourite apostle; another delights in the bright prospects of the Christian, and Peter is his favourite; another is lost in contemplation and love, and John is his beloved disciple; while another still is all activity, and James is his favourite. There are Marys, and there are Marthas, as there are Johns and Peters. Thus in faith, in the preference for particular truths, in emotions, in activity, there is great variety, even on the part of those who are subject to similar spiritual influences and are intimately associated in the same Christian work. And yet, every peculiarity, so far as it is Christian, represents some phase of Christianity and reflects some truth of the Gospel.

And all these peculiarities are necessary to give an idea of the infinite variety and the exhaustless richness of Christian truth.

It is not only irrational, but also an evidence of extreme narrowness, for one Christian to expect all others to be, to think, to feel, and to act just like himself. Were persons things, and were religion mechanical, then Christians might all be made machines that look and run alike. Unfortunately, a mania for monotony has frequently afflicted professors of religion, and this species of insanity is not yet removed. All through the history of the Church are seen repressive influences, coercive laws, and even deadly persecutions, in order to substitute a lifeless sameness for the diverse forms of free, spiritual life. Often has it been forgotten that religion deals with persons, and that it forms a free spiritual life which is as various as it is rich; consequently, it has frequently been treated as if it dealt only with things. It is only the blindness of ignorance or of prejudice that charges Romanism with being the only system that has made this mistake. Protestant sects, too, have lost sight of the inner, personal, spiritual character and aims of Christianity. Instead of permitting and aiding it to develop according to its own inherent energy, as the grain of mustard-seed develops into a mustard-plant, many who claimed to be its divinely-appointed guardians have subjected religion to foreign influences which were subversive of its principles and destructive of its very essence. That religion, like genius, is not lawless, but is a law unto itself, and that its subjection to other laws is destructive of all that is peculiar and valuable in it, has often been ignored. Repeatedly a

course has been marked out for religious processes and developments different from that laid down in Scripture; and frequent efforts have been made to force religion into this course by external influences. Not seldom has the nature of the Christian religion been misunderstood, in that its essence was regarded as law rather than Gospel, bondage rather than freedom. The evils that have sprung from this view are many. Legitimate diversity, the best sign of healthy life; individuality, personality, peculiarity, and freedom of conscience, have been repressed as things of evil. Religion has been regarded as a fixed mould, into which every man must be cast in order to be religious; whereas the cleansed heart is the mould into which religion is cast. True religion is to change the man into its likeness; and to be religious, he must adapt himself to its requirements. Nevertheless, it is just as true that religion adapts itself to individual peculiarities, and that it respects man's freedom and his idiosyncrasies. That religion which is essentially the same in all ages and in all persons is, nevertheless, different in different persons, and in each is as peculiar as his own personal peculiarity.

Since persons already differ when converted, and since the spiritual influences to which they are subject afterward differ, what will be the result of their spiritual growth? As far as their peculiarities are wrong, they will be decreased. The tendency to passion, self-will, avarice, worldly ambition, will be overcome, or, freed from all sin, will be directed in another channel. But so far as individual peculiarities are right, religion will utilize them, and spiritual growth will develop them. Growth is a development

of diversity. The less developed religion is, the more monotonous it is. Great diversity, therefore, if in harmony with the Gospel, so far from being an evidence of imperfection, is really an evidence of great spiritual development. The diversities are, of course, to be such as do not conflict with one another, but work harmoniously, and tend to the same end. It must be diversity in unity, different branches in the same vine, many members in one body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12 : 4, 5).

As we find variety essential to the perfection of nature, so also is it essential to perfection in the kingdom of God. Real, vigorous life, whether natural or spiritual, promotes variety. Death is the great leveller; and sameness is death. A thousand marbles may be of the same material, of the same size, weight, shape, and appearance. The uniformity and sameness may be perfect, and yet there is not the slightest unity. Drop the marbles from the hand and they will fly apart; there is nothing to hold them together. But take a tree, an organism, and from the lowest root to the topmost twig the variety is endless. Yet the unity is perfect. The same is true of all kinds of life; there is no sameness, no uniformity, but there is unity. The law of death, then, is sameness; the law of life is diversity.

Spiritual diversity fits Christians for the various offices in the Church, and for the various Christian duties. The work to be done by Christians is diverse, and different powers are necessary for its accomplish-

ment. And the greater the diversity of powers, the more efficiently can the cause of Christ be promoted. If all are adapted to one sphere, and that only, then the work of that sphere may be successfully done, but all other spheres will have to be neglected. But in well-developed Christian society this is not the case. Some are peculiarly adapted for teaching; others for comforting the distressed, relieving the poor, and ministering to the sick; while others still, with superior business tact, are best adapted for managing the business affairs of the Church. Some are more receptive, others more reflective, and others more active; some for counsel, others for executing plans. Some have fine sociable powers, and they have a special sphere, and one of great usefulness. If, now, a church realizes its diverse powers, and understands its mission, it will, if truly wise, so perfect its organization that the peculiar powers will be so utilized that each member will be assigned to that sphere for which he is best adapted, and in which he can be most useful. And these special natural endowments are developed and supplemented by grace, so as specially to fit Christians for their special spheres. There can be no doubt that not only by natural gifts and peculiarities persons are fitted for special spheres of activity, but God also grants special help and special preparation for special work. There are Christians who have spiritual genius for certain departments of Christian activity.

On this subject the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians is worthy of thorough study. In it there is the most complete discussion of Christian diversity in unity found in the Scriptures. And the same figure

(that of the body) which is used to teach the unity of Christians, is also used to teach their diversity. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations [offices in the Church, functions, spheres of labour], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations ['the various effects resulting from the exercise of the gifts in these particular ministries'], but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and we have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." The apostle also shows that the different members need one another, and that all, with their different functions, are necessary to constitute a perfect body. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? . . . . And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many

members, yet but one body." This diversity of power and function is, at the same time, perfect harmony, and is so ordered "that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." The result of this perfect unity, with all the diversity, is, that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Summing up the whole, the apostle says: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" In this chapter Paul is the apostle of diversity as well as of unity; or, rather, he is the apostle of unity in diversity, and of diversity in unity. He does not merely proclaim the fact of this diversity, but he shows that it is wrought by the Spirit, and that God himself appoints different officers and a diversity of gifts.

Legitimate diversity, therefore, instead of being deprecated, should not merely be tolerated, but should be appreciated as of divine appointment, and encouraged as essential to the life and growth and efficient working of Christian society. Without it, society worthy of the name could not exist. This diversity in unity is the condition for all profitable social communion. There must be unity to hold the members of the spiritual family together, to constitute them an organism; and there must be diversity

enough to give to this organism the variety which is essential to all life. If all the members were alike, then the power of attraction would be wanting, and social intercourse would be as tedious as unprofitable. Every profitable member of society has something that the others have not; he can, therefore, impart to them something which they lack. And every one, to be profited by society, must receive from others something he lacks, even if it be only the occasion or the impulse to benefit them. And Christian society is profitable and perfect in proportion as its diversity is greatest in the most perfect unity.

The doctrinal and practical differences among Christians are made most palpable by the existence of the different denominations. The differences thus brought to light are so great and glaring that the underlying unity is frequently lost sight of by the denominations themselves, as well as by the world. How are these denominational differences to be regarded as affecting Christian society? That great evils are connected with the present denominationalism is so apparent that it cannot be denied and need not be proved. Subjects of minor importance are frequently made denominational shibboleths, and are magnified to undue importance. Mint, anise, and cummin are tithed, while the weightier matters of the law and of the Gospel are neglected. The truth that belongs to the circumference is put in the centre of the whole system; while that which belongs in the centre is placed on the circumference or lost to sight altogether. The existence of the various denominations also fosters the spirit of sectarianism. This spirit sometimes leagues itself with the furies of prejudice

and passion, and engenders strife and wages the most ungodly warfare, in the very name of God, against Christian brethren. The various churches, even when not at war, do not recognize one another and co-operate as members of the same great body. The strength of the churches, that should be concentrated against the enemies of Christ, is often spent in destructive warfare against one another. The spectacle is sad and the havoc great. And so far as denominationalism promotes schism in the body of Christ, it must be condemned. Yet we are not justified in an unqualified condemnation of the division of the Church into different denominations. It has already been shown that this division does not destroy the real unity of the Church, though it may seriously interfere with the visible manifestation of that unity.

The evils now arising from the division of the Church into different parties, all of which hold the same fundamental truths, are by no means necessarily connected with that division. These evils might be removed, and yet there might be different denominations. And, on the other hand, these evils might exist if there were but one denomination. Let the spirit of Christ reign in these denominations, and these evils will vanish. There is no good reason why evangelical churches should not work harmoniously, and thus promote, separately and unitedly, the kingdom of God. This harmonious co-operation often takes place now. Frequently churches of different denominations are on better terms, and more intimately associated in Christian work, than those of the same name and in the same synod or conference. And with the present state of the Christian world, it

is not at all probable that the abolition of the denominations would remove the differences of opinion or end the controversies. And the controversies in a denomination are often far more bitter and unchristian than those between different denominations. In the Roman Catholic Church the fiercest conflicts have raged, some of which had to be settled by the sword. One need but read the history of Nominalism and Realism, and of Port Royal, to be convinced that great gulfs may divide parties in that church, which boasts of its unity. To claim that the removal of the denominations would be the end of strife, shows great ignorance of human nature as well as of church history. Probably no strife between evangelical denominations was ever more bitter than that waged in the Lutheran Church in the post-Reformation period.

It should be borne in mind that it is not the denominations that create divisions in the Church, but that the denominations grew out of divisions which existed before they arose. The natural inference, therefore, is, that the real divisions would continue, even if the denominations ceased. In the present state of Christian society, these divisions are unavoidable; and the existence of different denominations may be regarded as, in some respects at least, a blessing. For there is, no doubt, more peace if the real divisions in the Church lead to a separation, than there would be if all Christians were forced to exist under the same external organization. If Abraham and Lot cannot live together peaceably, then let them separate peaceably.

What is said here must not be understood as the least palliation of the evils connected with the present divisions. These evils need no exposure; they

expose themselves. No effort should be spared to remove them. The cure, however, cannot be effected by removing denominations and leaving the real divisions, but only by the removal of the real divisions. That some denominations have not sufficient ground for a separate existence is evident; and such will gradually be merged into others or die a natural death. While, however, the existence of different denominations continues, let them recognize the Church, which they are not, but of which they are only a part, and to which their brethren of other denominations also belong. A sect that arrogates to itself exclusively the prerogatives of the Christian religion, and denounces all other churches, proves that, whatever else it may have, it lacks much of the spirit of Christ. So long as it stands on the foundation of Christ, a church has a right to claim recognition from other churches. Its errors, instead of being winked at, are to be severely criticised, but in the spirit of Christian charity. In all the efforts in behalf of Christ's kingdom which require united action, there should be hearty co-operation. Let each church work in its sphere, not hindering other Christians, but with them aiming at the accomplishment of the same great purpose, which lies beyond all denominational peculiarities and which is greater. The different churches, so far as they are founded on the truth, will then develop different phases of Christian truth, and will direct special attention to different departments of Christian activity. Each will attract those to whom its peculiarities are best adapted. The diversities of Christians will then find the proper spheres for their exercise in the different denominations. And all the

denominations will represent that diversity in unity which is essential to the perfection of Christian society.

There are already many things to indicate that there is a tendency to go beyond all the separatistic peculiarities of the different churches to a common ground beyond them, on which all can stand and agree. This is the aim of the Evangelical Alliance and of various other Christian unions. The tendency to separate into factions, which began already during the Reformation, is yielding to a tendency to a closer visible union of Christians. And when the right of Christian diversity is properly recognized, different denominations will perhaps no longer be a necessity. This recognition does not imply latitudinarianism or indifferentism. It simply implies justice and truth. With all our boasted tolerance, we have not yet risen to this recognition ; and we have no reason to boast of a proper appreciation of Christian diversity. In an age almost exclusively practical and intensely active, he that gives himself to the contemplative side of religion, and cherishes its deep mystical elements, must expect to be ignored. Are we not in danger of losing our appeciation of the Johns and Marys, in our devotion to busy activity? Indeed, it is claimed that the Romish Church tolerates diversity more than Protestantism does, and that it also knows better how to utilize this diversity ; and there is some truth in that claim. A spiritual genius, with no law but that of the Christian religion, might find it exceedingly difficult to move unhindered in any denomination. The religious thinker may seize some thought that has been buried for ages, and give it special and deserved prominence. Suspected, unappreciated, misunder-

stood, calumniated, he may be compelled to move in solitary grandeur among men, a martyr to deep conviction and to unhonoured truth. His peculiarity is shared with no other; but it is, nevertheless, a peculiarity that is worthy of recognition. His peculiarity is not merely legitimate, but it is demanded by the very neglect of the age and by the truth. And it may contain the seed of needed revolutions and of the regeneration of the Church.

Christian society needs apostles of unity; but it needs as much, perhaps more, apostles of diversity. It needs a full recognition of the existing unity; but it needs, just as much, a full recognition and an appreciation of legitimate diversity among the followers of Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

THIS chapter is to be regarded as partly a development, and partly a synthesis, of the preceding chapters; it will also serve to prepare the way for the Second Part. We have ssen how Christian society originated; what laws Christ gave it, and how he illustrated them in his life; what is the Christian view of humanity, from which this society is formed; what the character of the members of the spiritual brotherhood is, and consequently of the brotherhood itself; how the members of the brotherhood recognize one another; what their unity is and what their diversity. The attention has thus far been directed to the consideration of the nature of this society, and this has prepared the way for the discussion of the relations it sustains.

A brief glance at the mission of this society will help us to understand these relations. Christian society is to help the individual members in their own spiritual development, and to make them more efficient labourers in the kingdom of God. The members are thus helpers to one another. Many of the Christian graces can only be developed and exercised in society; and for the attainment of the full stature of manhood or womanhood in Christ, companionship

with other believers is essential. In this spiritual development of the members, the society itself reaps the benefit, since the growth of its members is its own growth. In its development, the society grows in the realization of divine truth, becomes more truly the embodiment of it, and more fully the representative of that truth to the world. Many believers are mere beginners in the Christian school and have only learned the alphabet of religion ; the Christian virtues are, as yet, only seeds and germs ; they are to be taught and disciplined in society in all the elements of Christian culture. There is a great gulf between the real and the ideal Christian, and also between the real and the ideal Christian society. Believers have truth, but not yet the truth in its fulness ; only ideally are they representatives of Christ and his Gospel ; and only ideally do they form a perfect organism. Generally, Christ and his apostles give a picture of the ideal society. And the great aim of the growth of Christian society is to bring the real up to the standard of the ideal in all respects. The kingdom of God is established already ; but it is also yet a matter of the future. It was at hand when Christ came ; and yet he taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The coming of this kingdom is gradual. All spiritual development is the coming of the kingdom of God—that is, it is its more full realization, the bringing of the real up to the ideal. So all believers are God's children, and yet all their growth in grace makes them more really his children. It is common for the New Testament to call things in embryo what they only become after they have attained the perfect development of which they are capable.

Thus it speaks of believers and Christian society what they are potentially and ideally, and in its very names it gives the goal to be sought, not the one already attained. And one of the most important aims of Christian society is to lead its members, and thus itself, toward the ideal goal.

In their associated capacity believers are also more powerful in their influence on the world than they could be if isolated. In their union there is strength. By their united wisdom and by their hearty co-operation believers can accomplish much more than if every one worked by himself. In religion, as in all other things, men realize that for the accomplishment of great things there must be association, organization, unity of plan, and harmony of action.

With reference to the world, Christian society has a mission of the utmost importance. The life imparted to it, and of which it is the embodiment, is communicative, and is to diffuse itself throughout humanity. Christ's parting command to his disciples was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." This makes the mission of Christian society world-wide, a fact which few realize, but which is of the utmost importance. The whole earth is to become the Lord's, and believers are the ones who are to make disciples of all nations. Those who have been leavened by the Gospel—namely, Christian society—are to be the leaven of the rest of humanity. All that is human is to be made the actual recipient of the divine, so that the indwelling of God in humanity may become a reality. Not only are all men to be brought to the Lord, but also all that belongs to them is to be his.

Christian society is thus the divinely-chosen agency for the regeneration of mankind. In order to accomplish this, it must use the divine, and also the human and the earthly means within its reach. Its unceasing tendency is to spiritualize all men, and to consecrate all material objects to the divine purposes. In other words, Christian society aims at the redemption of man and of the world from the thraldom of sin and from the dominion of evil.

The relations of Christian society are arranged with a view to the accomplishment of this grand mission, Instead of discussing fully all these relations here, only some of the leading ones will be indicated.

The relation to Christ and to the Scriptures may be inferred from what has already been said. They are the creative source of Christian society, which must always sustain to them a relation of dependence. From Christ it receives its life, and also the nourishment to sustain and develop that life. But its relation is not merely to the Christ of the past, but also of the present; not to Christ as absent, but as here. Christianity has its doctrinal and historical basis in the New Testament. But it is a mistake to suppose that all the evidences of its truth and power are to be found in the past. The Bible is itself a witness of the truth contained in it; the Church, all through the history of its development, is also a witness to the truth; and so is every believer, and so is the whole body of believers. And there is a present, living, working Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; he manifests himself as really to his disciples now as he did eighteen centuries ago; and he as truly attests to the spirit his saving power now

as he did then. His attesting power perdures through the ages and is made manifest to every believing heart.

Christian society, as immediately related to Christ as present, is the embodiment of the truth of Christ and of his life. This spiritual life in Christian society is a perpetual witness for the truth of Christianity. To its possessor it attests its genuineness, and to others it is also an evidence of the reality and power of Christianity. Christian society is thus a witness of man's spiritual nature and needs; that he is more than of the earth earthy, and that he has spiritual faculties, spiritual appreciation, and spiritual instincts; it is also a witness of the power of Christianity to meet these needs and thus to accomplish what this earth and other systems have failed to do. Christianity does not interfere with the earthly, but it supplements it, doing what that cannot. The spiritual brotherhood is a mighty living witness to prove that the Gospel is perfectly adapted to man in all ages, relations, and circumstances; and its marvellous humanity is a strong testimony in favour of the divinity of the Gospel.

But while this society is an embodiment, ideally at least, of Christ's life and truth, it is by no means to take the place of Christ and the Gospel, so as to undervalue them or set them aside; but as a witness for them it is to be the means of leading to them. Even when organized in a church, this society cannot supersede the Gospel, but is to aim to make that Gospel all the more prominent and potent. Christ, the Gospel, and the Spirit are active in Christian society and through it; but it is a mistake to suppose that

their activity is confined to this society, or that in this society all their power is deposited. They may exist and act without this society, but this society cannot exist and act without them. It must not, therefore, be imagined that all the treasures of grace and all saving power is committed to Christian society to dispense as it pleases. The whole body of believers, as well as the individual believer, is a schoolmaster unto Christ; it thus leads to him who dispenses the riches of grace, and from whom every one who gets them must receive them. Whatever human agencies may have been used, the regeneration of every soul is as directly a divine act as was the conversion of the first disciple of Christ.

The moon receives its light from the sun, and then sheds the light thus received on the earth. The moon is a real blessing, but it is entirely dependent on the sun for its light; it cannot take the place of the sun, and yet all the light it gives is a witness of the existence and power of the sun. Such is the relation of Christian society to Christ.

It is more difficult to state exactly the relation of Christian society to the Church. The main points of this relation have, however, already been indicated. The Church contains Christian society, but also many who, like the tares in the parable, are locally *in* the kingdom of God, but are not *of* it. There is also Christian society which is not directly formed by the Church. Whenever Christians meet they form Christian society; and the very life in every believer is a social energy impelling him to seek the companionship of those who have the same faith. So that independent of the associations formed directly by the

Church, there are also many voluntary Christian associations which are the spontaneous product of the social tendencies of God's children.

Probably no subject in theology is more in need of thorough study and systematic development than Ecclesiology. Especially is it important to settle definitely just what is meant by the Church. Now it is used in a great variety of senses, and often very indefinitely. Where sects are numerous, it is far more easy to form an idea of the churches than of the Church; and where but one Church is found, it is generally viewed as the Church. It is evident that the visible Church, and the kingdom of God as described by Christ, are not synonymous; and it is equally evident that the Church of to-day does not correspond with the ideal given of the Church by the apostles. If we adhere to the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, we shall have in the latter the true and Scriptural idea of the Church. But here we are chiefly concerned with the relation of Christian society to the visible Church.

Whatever voluntary Christian associations may be formed, they should not weaken any other agencies of Christ, but should rather seek to co-operate with them. All of them are needed to accomplish the redemption of the world. Least of all can voluntary Christian associations take the place of the Church; they are rather to be auxiliaries of the churches. Even among believers there is a tendency to depreciate the Church with its organized power, its sacraments, its worship, its institutions and agencies. In part, some of the churches are to blame for this, and the tendency itself is a warning to them to be more

circumspect. But this state of things is also largely due to carnal self-will, to the undue exaltation of mere opinion on the part of the individual, and to depreciation of the claims of the spiritual organism. There is a development of the individual at the expense of society; it is selfish and socially destructive, and it wantonly severs family, social, and religious ties. This disintegrating process a true sociology must oppose, however much it may maintain the rights of individuals. Every true believer should see his indebtedness to the Church, and should recognize it as his duty to work for the progress of the Church, so that it may attain its ideal. The believer who opposes the true Church of Christ attempts to cut off the limb on which he stands, and with it he himself must fall. Christian society, therefore, will strive to co-operate with the Church, and will labour to make it the most perfectly-organized form of Christian association. The true Church should be viewed by all believers as the right hand of God on earth.

With all its imperfections, the Church has done a great work. Even the Middle Ages, as they are better understood, add to her glory. She has been the channel for the communication of the divine power to men, and has been God's prophet to the nations. As a grand missionary institution she has civilized and Christianized the most barbarous people. She has been the conscience of nations, in that she made them hear the thunderings of Sinai; and she has been a redemptive power, in that she pointed them to Calvary. But these facts do not justify the exaltation of everything in the Church. It is not the Church in its totality which has been such a blessing to humanity;

but it is to the Christian spirit, to the truth, and to Christian society in the Church that the world is so greatly indebted. There have been many errors and wrongs in the Church, and in her name many crimes have been committed; it was not by these, but in spite of them, that the cause of Christ triumphed. Bad men have been raised to positions of the greatest honour and power, just as there were bad men among the prophets, and a Judas among the disciples; but even the wickedness and the wrath of men may be made to praise God. Hence, when we speak of the glory of the visible Church, it should not be forgotten what it is that gave her that glory, and what elements in her would have turned her glory into shame. "The accurate distinction between the churchly society and the Church of Christ will first lead us to the right track."* So far as the Church is subject to Christ, it is worthy of all honour. The apostle describes this Church thus: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."†

The Christian spirit is free spontaneity; and while by its own choice it submits to all lawful authority, it is sublimely independent. It wants room and opportunity to act out its impulses, and to body forth in freedom the mighty energies working within. This is its privilege, its right, and its duty. The Church cannot determine just how this free spirit must, under

* Van Oosterzee's Dogmatics, p. 705. † Eph. 5: 25–27.

all circumstances, express itself. No external laws, but its own spiritual affinities, must determine its associations. It is self-evident that Christ and the Scriptures determine the sphere of these affinities. The Church must not suppress this energizing spirit, teeming with thoughts and emotions and inspirations; it has no right to repress Christian spontaneity and liberty. There may be occasions when the law of God and the law of a church are in conflict, and then the former is absolute.* The Church is made for Christian society, not Christian society for the Church. The Church has value only so far as it accomplishes God's purposes, and helps the individual and society. It is, like all other divine agencies, means, and not an end; it exists for the glory of God and for the salvation of man. When, however, it is made an end in itself, and Christian society is regarded merely as the means to attain that end; then the true idea of the Church is lost and its aim is perverted. Christ himself came to minister, not to be ministered unto;† and the Church is to be like its Lord in this respect, instead of attempting to rule where Jesus served. But if the same mind that was in Christ is not in a church, then it may be necessary to assert heroically the rights of the individual and of Christian society. Even if there are only two believers to form Christian society, they have the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."‡ And these two will form a true

* Acts 4 : 19–20; 5 : 29. † Matt. 20 : 28.

‡ Matt. 18 : 20. There may be times when such association, even when opposed by a church, is necessary. We need but refer to the free associations before the Reformation, as well as to those at the beginning of Pietism and Methodism.

Church of Christ, while a vast multitude, organized into a band, may sustain to it the relation which the Jews in the Garden of Gethsemane sustained to Christ.

All that can be done by Christian Sociology to bring the true Church into the very highest appreciation, it should do; but the best way to do this is by drawing a distinction between the true and the false, and by promoting the development of the real Church toward the ideal New Testament Church. This can now be the better accomplished, because the days for the Church as a hierarchy are past, and because the evangelical Church is itself promoting the true idea of the Church.

The relation of the Church to the State is not a burning question in America, as it is in Europe, since we have no union of Church and State. In the United States the question could hardly have arisen, Whether the Church would ever be absorbed by the State.* But the relation of religion and of Christian society to the State is a vital question for America as well as for Europe, and it is a subject which is exciting more attention than formerly. While some are working to secure the recognition of God in the Constitution of the United States, others are working to prevent the appointment of chaplains, the recognition of Sunday, and everything else that savours of religion, by the Government.

Christianity is a spiritual power, which tries to

* Richard Rothe, of Heidelberg, following the lead of Hegel, thought that the State is destined to perform all the functions now performed by the Church, and that, consequently, the latter will be absorbed by the former.

establish and perpetuate itself by spiritual means, and by earthly instrumentalities, so far as they are right, and promote divine truth. In the State, Christian society can demand protection in the exercise of its rights. But it has no right to interfere with the liberty of others, and to demand that they shall give up their religious views. Coercion in spiritual matters is totally at variance with the spirit of the Christian religion. The laws may protect Christian society in its religious exercises; but they cannot be properly used to coerce men to become Christian. Even the recognition of God in the Constitution seems mockery, so long as he is not recognized by the people in their hearts. To say that we, the people of the United States, recognize Almighty God, when it is patent to every one that we do not, is a glaring falsehood. It is better to work for the recognition of God in the heart of the nation, so as to bring the people up to the point that we can say with truth in the Constitution that we recognize him.

This suggests a radical evil which Christian society is called on to remove—namely, the tendency to make hobbies of mere words and externals, instead of working to promote deep and vital heart-religion. It is the mission of this society to Christianize the State, not to secure an empty recognition of religion. The Government is to be made more and more a real theocracy; but this can only be done by making the truth of God supreme in the hearts of men. When that is done, then everything else will follow. This is, perhaps, a slow work, done largely "without observation;" but it is evidently *the* work incumbent on Christian society. Christianity should, indeed, rule

the State, but only by making the citizens free in Christ, so that they will themselves choose what Christianity demands.

If laws are enacted which are in conflict with the believer's conscience, then he must submit to the punishment for violating the laws, rather than violate his conscience. No effort should then be spared to remove such laws. Indeed, Christian society may do the State good service in the efforts to secure such laws, and such only, as are right, and will prove a blessing to the community. Even if there can be no direct religious legislation, the moral standard of the Gospel may be made the ideal for the State. A Christian spirit should pervade the laws, instead of the atheistic spirit which some would infuse into them. And it is especially important to recognize the relation of man to man as given by Christ, instead of the selfish and clannish theories which low politicians are apt to advocate. Instead of heathen or atheistic notions, the real brotherhood of man should be advocated.

In relation to the State, Christian society can do much to promote its ends by showing the beauty of its theories in their practice. There is a conquering power in the ethical truths of the Gospel, when their working is contrasted with the maxims of the world. But this society is also called on to take an active part in politics. The State needs and deserves the very best men in its various departments, and its purest men should be its leading politicians. If they refuse places of trust, is it a wonder if demagogues occupy and abuse them? If believers did their political duty religiously, there would soon be but few places

where men of bad character could carry important elections.

Aside from all religious legislation, the spiritual brotherhood in a State has a large and important sphere for the exercise of its political and moral influence, in which it can claim the co-operation of all patriots, whether Christian or not. To this sphere belong education; the suppression of all publications which vitiate the morals of the people, especially of the young; temperance; marriage and divorce; the removal of the social evil, and the like. Many questions connected with commerce and trade, and with the relation of employer and employé, ought to be viewed in the light of Christian ethics. There are, in fact, always vital and burning questions enough in politics to engage the most serious attention and the most earnest efforts of Christian society.

As we are now discussing other than spiritual relations, it becomes a question of moment, How far may Christian society sustain worldly relations and relations with non-believers? Man's physical nature has rights and needs, as well as the spiritual. Christianity does not sympathize with the gnostic view that matter is evil in itself, and that therefore its power must be suppressed. When this view found expression in the Church in various forms of asceticism and in the torture of the body, it was evidently a perversion of Christ's teachings. He does not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil.* Believers must engage in worldly occupations and attend to worldly

* John 17 : 15.

affairs, and they are also obliged to associate with men who are not spiritual.

So far as worldly affairs are right and necessary, believers ought to engage in them. In doing this, they adapt themselves to the divine arrangement and do God's will. They are to be in the world, but not of it; not worldly-minded or conformed to the world, but spiritual in mind in the midst of their worldly avocations. This leaves a large variety of occupations which the Christian may enter, but there are also many which he cannot enter and yet maintain his Christian character.

More important, perhaps, is the question, how far the believers may enter into relations with non-believers. They can, of course, enter into no relations which can in any way be regarded as a compromise of the Christian character. This is the general rule: *Christian society can associate with all, so far as its aims and theirs agree, and so far only.* Simple and self-evident as the law seems to be, it is of immense significance for Christian society as a whole, as well as for all Christian social circles and individuals. It is a law to which there are no exceptions, and it applies to all Christian association. Its full apprehension and its consistent practice are of inestimable value; therefore the careful consideration of the rule is of importance. Indeed, the practice of this simple rule would produce a great revolution in society.

Nothing must be done by believers in their associations with non-believers that will compromise the truth. Better avoid the ungodly than do this. In this association, it must be understood that all errors in doctrine and evils in practice are reprobated by the

Christian. Nor must Christian society, by its associations with the worldly, endanger its own faith. There may be times and occasions when a decided rejection of unbelievers and antagonism to heretics are a duty. When the Church is first established, or when Christian society is not yet well grounded in the faith and is liable to contamination, an entire social separation from those holding false doctrines may be necessary.* Harshness with purity is better than a false leniency with corruption. "First pure, then peaceable," is the rule of the wisdom that is from above. Safeguards are necessary in the relations of believers to unbelievers, but especially in relation to those who are avowed opponents of the truth and are open teachers of pernicious error.

Keeping well in mind these cautions, believers can enter into many intimate relations with those who are worldly, and, indeed, often circumstances make such relations inevitable. There can, of course, be no such heart and soul fellowship as with a fellow-believer; but in many pursuits there may be hearty co-operation. Frequently society is controlled rather by antipathies and antagonisms than by affinities and

* False teachers which sneak into houses and try to lead persons astray, are to be avoided. In ancient times, such seemed especially to seek influence over women. (2 Tim. 3 : 6.) John, in his second epistle, 10, 11, warns against hospitality to false teachers, no doubt because of the danger of being a sharer in their evil deeds and of becoming contaminated by false doctrine. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [the doctrine of Christ], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." See also Phil. 3 : 2; Gal. 1 : 8, 9; 1 Cor. 16 : 22.

harmonies. This is true, in many instances, even of the relation between believers. Where all the great essentials of religion unite them, some non-essential opinion, or ceremony, or form of government may separate them. Even if the unifying is to the repelling power as a million to one, the latter may gain the day. Instead of letting antipathies and antagonisms be the ruling factors in society, why not give the affinities and harmonies an equal chance? As far as men do agree, so far, if it can be done without compromising truth and character, they ought to co-operate. Thus, evangelical Christians can unite on all the essential doctrines of Christ, and can co-operate in all great spiritual movements. In doctrine, in spirit, in work, they are sufficiently united to prove to the world that evangelical Christendom is one. The society of evangelical Christians differs greatly in doctrine, worship, government, and methods of work from Roman Catholic society; but on many doctrinal points they agree, and so far they can work together for the promotion of these doctrines. Then, they can unite in opposing infidelity, worldliness, vice, and crime; and they can co-operate in many charitable movements without detriment to either party. So far as the Catholic Church represents the truth in doctrine and in works, it sheds a lustre on Christianity; and it is a strange infatuation which delights in besmirching this lustre, and even in hiding it behind the clouds of error and corruption in that Church. Evangelical society may feel in conscience bound to oppose the peculiar tenets of Universalists, Unitarians, Swedenborgians, and many others; but while doing this even with an apostle's anathema, why not, at the same

time, admit that evangelical society can go a great way with them, and that in opposing atheistic materialism, political corruption and vice, and in advocating great moral reforms, they may be intimate and powerful associates? Even with the Jews, Christian society may go much farther and more intimately than is now the case. They are essentially one with Christians in upholding monotheism and the spirituality of worship, also in the reverence for the law and the prophets, as well as in many other moral and religious views and practices. The light which their learning throws on the Old Testament is the heritage of the Christian Church as well as of Israel. Against atheism and various forms of infidelity the Hebrews may be specially powerful. Why, if it can be done without compromise, should not Christian society and Israel go together in religion and morals, until their ways separate?

We might go on indefinitely, showing how the rule applies to worldly men of various classes, to Mohammedans, and even to the heathen. But enough has been said to indicate the meaning and application of the law that Christian society may associate with all, so far as its aims and theirs agree, and so far only—always keeping in mind the cautions given above. The general adoption of this law would greatly augment the power of Christian society, while, at the same time, believers would be safe, since this safety is a fundamental condition of the association. By this association Christian society would gain the co-operation of others on all points wherein they are agreed. Besides, the superior truth and power of Christian

society would also be made more manifest to non-believers by such association and co-operation.

From the rule just discussed, it is a legitimate deduction that association will be complete, perfect, and intimate in proportion to the agreement of those who are parties to the association, which explains the fact that believers can associate with one another more fully than with others in all spiritual matters. The correctness of this inference all will admit; and its truth helps to prove the correctness of the rule whence it is drawn.

In education Christian society has a deep interest. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of wisdom and of knowledge, and it impels its possessor to seek to comprehend the deep things of God. Only a perverted view, which places religion in the emotions or the will, and ignores the intellect, can depreciate knowledge. The truth which the Christian loves he will also try to comprehend.* There is much in the Gospel for the illiterate; but there are also many things which can be understood only by the scholar. For its own sake Christianity must, therefore, foster education. The masses are to be enlightened, so as to enable them the better to appreciate God and his truth, and to make them better and happier.

Christian society is, of course, chiefly interested in spiritual culture, and therefore lays special stress on

* There is much truth in the saying of John Picus, Prince of Mirandola: "Philosophy seeks the truth, theology finds it, religion possesses it." But healthy religion does not want to possess the truth blindly; it also wants to understand and comprehend what it possesses. The impulse of religion is both to produce faith and knowledge, Pistis and Gnosis.

religious education. In a country where there are few parochial schools, and in which the public schools give no religious instruction, or next to none, this subject is worthy of special attention. How are the children to receive the needed religious instruction? The subject becomes the more important and difficult if but few of the children attend divine services, and but few receive catechetical instruction. The home is undoubtedly the place for the earliest religious culture. But how is it if the home-life is very defective, if the parents are not religious, or if they are indifferent, or have not the education themselves to instruct their children? The Sunday-school is doing a grand work; but however efficient it may be, its one hour of instruction a week cannot possibly do the work needed. With all our boasted education, the thorough religious instruction of the young is sadly neglected, and this neglect is telling on the churches and on society. It is not a superficial knowledge of religious facts and a mere smattering of knowledge that are needed, but real education and thorough discipline. In many quarters, where better things might be expected, the defect in religious training and the ignorance of religious truth are as sad as they are astounding. It is sincerely to be hoped that Christian society will appreciate the fact that the religious education of the young and of the masses is a burning question which demands a speedy solution.

This society is also interested in the higher education in all departments of learning, and it fosters colleges and universities. All truth is harmonious and of God. It is only science and philosophy, falsely so called, which are dangerous. But that makes it the

more urgent to get beyond these to the true philosophy and science. Religion can neither be created nor destroyed by science; it has its sure basis in man and in God. With the sublimest confidence the believer can encourage all true culture, assured that it must lead up to God. It is not depth he has to fear, but shallowness, which vaunts itself as profundity. Reason and faith are no more antagonistic than are spirit and matter, the divine and the human; but the difficulty is to determine exactly the sphere of each. Reason has its domain; when it leaves that and enters another, it is an intruder and a robber; and the same must be said of faith. It is not reason in its proper sphere which faith has to fear, but mere empiricism substituted for the rational.

Christian society is destined to pass from faith to faith, and from knowledge to knowledge. In crises, it may be called to pass also through doubt to faith, through error to truth, through false philosophy and science to the true. Rationalism, pantheism, pessimism, positivism, materialism, and the like, are not ghosts which can be banished with an anathema, or with the sign of the cross; but they must be mastered, and by the severest logic and the strictest science must be shown to be defective. Christian society cannot afford to stand before them and tremble, nor can it turn its back on them; but it must dialectically pass through them and beyond them. Its scholars must go back of evolution to find the Creator, and in the laws of evolution they must find the laws of God. And if it should happen that the greatest names in science are atheistic, then there comes a loud call to Christian society to furnish masters in science; for in

God's kingdom science and philosophy, as well as all other powers, are to be consecrated to God.

Christian society, therefore, cannot be indifferent to the highest learning, nor can it afford to oppose it; but it must seek to promote it to the utmost. As in the past, so now will it be found that all attacks serve to make believers more fully conscious of the truth, and to develop and purify that truth. The fire through which divine truth passes separates the dross from the gold. Christianity esteems truth above all other things; if, therefore, the truth could overthrow religion, Christianity itself would demand its overthrow. True religion demands the destruction of religion, if that religion is false.

Christians cannot be indifferent to reforms; they should, in fact, take the lead in them. The Gospel is the means for all radical reform, and believers will strive to make it the basis of all reformatory movements. They must be controlled by the Christian spirit even while co-operating with men of the world for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. The solid basis of Gospel truth is calculated to save the body of believers from being carried away by fanaticism and by popular excitement, and from pursuing favourite subjects as hobbies in a one-sided manner. Temperance, the social evil, the poor, the condition of the labouring classes, pernicious literature, and criminals, furnish subjects enough worthy of the attention of Christian society. Conventions in the interest of reform may be useful, but they can only call attention to the work to be done, and lay plans for its accomplishment. The reforms needed, as a rule, require hard, persevering, and self-denying work.

And if evils seem to grow instead of yielding to Christian effort, that is only the more urgent reason for increasing the zeal and self-denial. Those who lose faith in the power of the truth and spirit of God to do the needed work, and expect Christ in his second coming to do what he has made the mission of Christian society, are really paralyzing Christian effort.

Men who have pet schemes of reform, whether of temperance or something else, and denounce all who do not see and work just as they do, are not likely to be delivered from their fanaticism either by reason or the Gospel. On many matters of expediency there is room for honest difference; and those who are most zealous in a good cause have no right to make themselves a law for others.

It is difficult to give, in a few words, the relation of Christian society to amusements; yet the subject is too important to be omitted. The fact that the opinions on the subject differ so greatly is a reason for its discussion; though whatever the result attained may be, it will probably meet with much opposition.

There is a play-element in human nature which religion should not ignore. It is safe to say that it has both divine and human authority for its existence and exercise. It is found in freest exercise in children, the very ones of whom Christ said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is evidently the part of wisdom not to attempt to suppress this element, but to direct it into its proper sphere. All sinful amusements, and such as tend to sin, are to be opposed. But if all these could be destroyed by Christian society, there would still be a great work to be done in putting innocent and beneficial ones in their place.

Take a city with a thousand young men, mostly clerks, mechanics, and labourers, many of them away from home, and few of them having attractive lodgings, or the houses of friends to visit; where and how shall they spend their evenings? They may have but little taste, or be too tired, for reading; hence the city library does not attract them. What they want is entertainment, amusement, company. But where shall they find these? What provision does Christian society make to meet their tastes and wants? In many cases, none at all. But the saloons, with their card-tables and billiard-halls, and low theatres, are always ready to entice, and to welcome, and to destroy them. It is hardly less than pitiable folly to inveigh against these, and yet do nothing to establish institutions to take their place. The children of this world are, in this respect, much wiser than the children of light, for they make their haunts of vice most attractive, while the latter do not even make a serious effort to present counter-attractions.

It is useless to say that young men ought to be above such things; that they ought to prefer more refined and intellectual pursuits. We must take men as they are, and adapt ourselves to them, not as they ought to be. The fact is, that many, as far as the play-element is concerned, remain till old age very near childhood; and they must be met on this plane, if they are met at all. What they need is innocent amusement and elevating entertainment, freed from all evil associations, and connected with salutary influences. Philanthropy, as well as religion, suggests that, to counteract the gilded saloons with their seductive influences, there are needed attractive refresh-

ment-rooms without liquor, with the best literary and pictorial journals, together with various kinds of innocent games. Gymnasia and ten-pin alleys may also be serviceable. Popular lectures, free to all or with a small admission fee ; entertaining exhibitions, concerts, and the like, may also be useful. There are many ways of both entertaining and instructing which might be adopted. Indeed, entertainments may be of such a nature as to lead the lover of amusements to serious reflection, and thus they may become schoolmasters unto Christ. Surely, this whole subject is worthy of far more serious attention than it now receives.

The opera and the theatre of the day may be worthy of the reputation they have among the mass of believers. The show-bills of some plays are enough to brand them as infamous, and the performers as vile wretches and a travelling plague. No anathema can do justice to the lewd performers who, before a promiscuous audience, by dress, gesture, and language, exert a vicious influence. If the purity of youth were sacred to our laws, such heathenism would not be tolerated. But there are also more respectable performances which are not worthy of patronage, because the tendency of the plays and the character of the company are objectionable. But while fully admitting this, that is no reason for saying that the opera and the theatre are altogether and necessarily evil. May they not be so reformed as to make vice repulsive and virtue attractive, and to present religion in its true light? Whether it will ever be done or not, the stage might be made a great moral power. There are plays now which are unobjectionable, which good

Christians read, and the moral power of which they feel; and, if properly acted, that moral power would be still more deeply felt, and would, consequently, be still more beneficial. The same applies to operas, with which all the elevating and refining influences of music may be connected. There are dramas of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller which portray human life in the most interesting situations, with its great crises, its intense passions, and with its deepest thoughts; why the acting of such plays is wrong does not seem very clear. Nor does there seem to be any good reason why there should not be genuine Christians among actors and actresses.

Surely, no one will understand or pervert the above to be an apology for the stage of to-day; but if it is a true ideal of what the stage may be, is not that ideal worthy of the attention and aim of Christian society? It might shock the religious sensibilities of the present to speak of a Christian theatre; but that is among the possibilities of the future.

Christian society cannot afford to subject itself to the charge of being hostile to art. It must prove itself the friend of the highest degree of culture and refinement in every department. But it must distinguish between true and false culture and refinement. So it must distinguish between the proper and the improper, the refining and the debasing in art. It is the friend of painting, but not of obscene pictures; it wants to encourage statuary, but not such as will offend modesty and prove demoralizing. It should not be forgotten that while art may be Christian, it may, also, be heathenish; and that while it may promote true refinement, it may also promote

lust. This applies to all departments of art. And there is no good reason why the drama should not be brought into the service of Christianity, just as well as eloquence, poetry, music, painting, architecture, and sculpture.

But on this subject there are such perverted notions that the impression is made that Christianity is hostile to art. At church festivals and sociables children sometimes give recitations and act. This does not seem to be seriously objected to, probably because the acting is so exceedingly poor. If a professional actor would perform the same piece in truly artistic style, it is probable that many would be shocked. And yet if there is to be acting at all, why not have the best possible?

In itself, dancing is not wrong. It may be religious, and as such it is evidently sanctioned in the Bible. The sexes may dance separately for recreation, for health, or for the sake of developing the body or promoting graceful movement. Then it might be put among gymnastics (as is sometimes the case), and might be beneficial. There are some dances in which men and women may, perhaps, engage as harmlessly as in a promenade; but there are others which are very objectionable, and these should be decidedly opposed. While, therefore, dancing in itself is not wrong, there are dances which are objectionable. And even if a dance is not wrong in itself, its associations may be such as to make it wrong for a Christian to engage in it. It may be so fascinating as to lead to a waste of time; it may seriously offend a Christian brother, so that it is not charitable toward him to take part in it; it may lead to objectionable

company; or such temptations to wrong may be connected with it that Christian wisdom will say, It is better not to dance at all than to subject one's self or others to these dangers.

The same rule applies to many other things. There is no more wrong in playing billiards than in croquet; but the associations and temptations of the game may make it wrong. The fact is, that the playing of the most innocent game may be made wrong through its associations.

The subject of amusements would present less difficulties if the aim of amusement were kept in view. Its aim is not to "kill time;" nor has it any value in itself. It is intended to supply a real need of human nature, and to furnish such recreation as fits for the serious business of life. Instead of interfering with the performance of duty, it is to prepare for it. If pleasure is made the business of life, it is wrong. And any amusement which becomes a passion and interferes with the discharge of duty is sinful. Thus an amusement which is innocent in itself may have to be shunned by the believer, because it becomes a snare to him and interferes with his relation to God and his fellow-men.

Many other relations of Christian society might be discussed; but the above are believed to be among the most important, and from them the essential features of all the other relations may be inferred. While this society must enter into many relations not directly religious, they must not be opposed to religion, must not receive undue attention, so as to take the place belonging to religion only, and, as far as possible, they must be made to minister to spiritual

ends. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Then this earth and all its fulness should be consecrated to the Lord; and that is the ultimate aim of Christian society in all its relations. Society, education, politics, amusements, business, all are to be the Lord's ministering spirits. In creating man, God made him lord over all things. Christ came to make this dominion ideally real. Hence the apostle can say to believers, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." But it must not be forgotten that the ground of this universal inheritance is given by the words which follow: "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."*

* 1 Cor. 3: 21-23.

SECOND PART.

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—THE NATURE OF THE PRACTICAL.

THIS part of Christian Sociology is related to the first as the plant is to the seed whence it grows. While the first part teaches what Christian society is and how it is related, the second part gives the theory of Christian social practice. As the first part gives the true idea of Christian society, and also of its relations, so the second part shows how this idea is to be realized. The second part, therefore, deals with duties. The first is more theoretical than the second part; but, at the same time, the practical must strike its roots in theory; otherwise, it will be superficial and cannot be reduced to system.

In speaking of the second part of Christian Sociology as practical, it is important to form a correct view of the practical. The word is frequently used now as the opposite of the deep and scholarly; and the manner in which it is often contrasted with the theoretical is calculated to make the impression that theories cannot be practical. An education which lacks depth and thoroughness, but which gives rules

and knowledge immediately adapted to business, is termed practical. A minister who neglects doctrine and avoids the profound teachings of God's Word, but talks glibly about current events and every day affairs, is called a practical preacher. If it is thus made to designate only what is shallow, the practical can hardly escape merited contempt. And the very fact that the word is thus used is evidence of superficial thinking. An English writer, in speaking of the Word, says: "This solitary term serves a large number of persons as a substitute for all patient and steady thought; and, at all events, instead of meaning that which is useful, as opposed to that which is useless, it constantly signifies that of which the use is grossly and immediately palpable, as distinguished from that of which the usefulness can only be discerned after attention and exertion, and must at first be chiefly believed on the faith of authority." The fact that the philosopher, the scientist, and the profound theologian may meet the deepest needs of an age, and therefore may be most truly practical, is altogether overlooked; so is the fact that the deepest doctrines of Christianity are intensely practical. This false view of the practical has much to do with the depreciation of doctrine and of speculation in our day. Surely, no thoughtful American can be flattered, if his countrymen are called practical in this perverted sense.

With respect to the practical there are three possible stages. The first is that of childhood, when there is but little reflection and theorizing, but when the life is pre-eminently one of outward activity. Much of this activity is thoughtless, arbitrary, the product of mere blind impulse, and it has in it more of physical

than of intellectual energy. It is evident that many remain through life essentially in this primitive state. Here is found the practical as that word is now commonly used. In religion, this stage is found where there is mere formality, work-holiness, or where the activity depends, not on principle, but on impulse. It is characteristic of those in this state that they adopt the foolish notion that doctrine and faith are secondary, if only the life is right; not reflecting enough to learn that the seed on stony ground (without depth) is fruitless.

Others pass beyond this stage to that of reflection: when the mind turns its attention on itself, and watches its own operations; when an effort is made to get back of mere phenomena into things themselves, so as to understand their nature; when the effort is to understand causes, and to find the key which unlocks the mysteries of the universe. In these inquiries, men may, indeed, chase phantoms and imagine that they have realities; and while thinking that they are awake, they may be only dreaming, and their visions may so enrapture them that realities lose their attractions. There are visionaries, dreamers, unpractical idealists, who in thought, if not in body, are hermits. In religion, they only demand that men shall think correctly of divine things; they are satisfied with dead faith and dead orthodoxy; they are dogmatical, but not ethical. This is one extreme, and the superficially practical is its opposite. If the former could produce a sociology at all, it would be a lifeless skeleton; while the latter would make it merely external legality.

There is useless theorizing; but only stupidity will

put genuine speculation and profound thought into this category. Real thinking is *real*, and not dreamy or fantastic. And many pass beyond the second stage to the third, namely, that in which thought goes out into action. This is by far the most perfect stage, and contains all that is valuable in the others. The spirit tries to objectify itself, to give itself and all its thoughts, emotions, and volitions a body in words and deeds and institutions. It is not content with thoughtless activity, nor with useless theory; but it cherishes true ideals and strives to make them real. This spirit has depth and is, at the same time, thoroughly practical; and it is so practical because it is so deep. It may seem paradoxical, but it is a truth, and a truth our age greatly needs: *that which is deepest is the most practical.* Thought attains its perfection in life; the idea is perfect only when it becomes real; and the practical is the crown of the theoretical. All mental conception without a birth is an abortion.

What has been said will indicate what thought is to dominate the second or practical part of Sociology. With mere outward activity it has nothing to do; it cannot regard it as worthy of notice. When it speaks of Christian social conduct, it views it as having its source within; as something which has heart and conscience in it; as something in which the believer gives himself. Thus, in the words and deeds of the Christian, it is not the mouth and hands that are the actors; they are but instruments, the spirit is the actor.

It may, therefore, be said to be the aim of Christian social ethics to realize in life Christian social dogmatics; to make the idea of Christian society and of

its relations real. Thus, the second part is based on the first, and is so vitally and organically connected with it that it grows from it. The might of every great life is in its ideas; not in abstractions which are dead, but in living ideas, seized by faith, lived into the spirit, and bodied forth by the spirit. It is the creative power of ideas which makes artists, reformers, great preachers, and statesmen. In our second part we speak only of ideas in practice; and we look to the first part for the thoughts which are to dominate the second. Seized by a living faith, these thoughts become energizing powers; and a system of social ethics is to aid them to work themselves out in life.

In order that the conduct may be shown to be vitally connected with that which is inner and deep, it will be necessary, first of all, to find the principle of Christian social ethics, the root from which the whole system grows.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONTROLLING PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS.

CHRIST is the source of Christian social ethics, as well as of Christian social dogmatics; therefore, the ethics must start with, and must embody, the living, personal Saviour. His principles of social ethics must also be those of the believer, and his example of social conduct is the Christian's model in his social relations. It is thus evident that the second part of our subject is not less directly related to Christ and his Gospel than is the first.

The ethical truths, like the dogmatical, are scattered all through the New Testament. These truths are partly individual, partly social. Taken by themselves, or collected and loosely strung together, they do not form a system, but only the materials for a system. In speculative ethics the system is simply evolved from the human mind, without recognizing the Bible as supreme authority. To make the Scriptures alone the source of the system, would be a false supernaturalism; to make the human mind alone the source would be rationalism. The Scriptures *and* the Christian spirit are both necessary to form a system of Christian morality. The truth of Scripture must enter the spirit, must be organized and developed by

that spirit, otherwise the truths will be isolated and cannot form a system. The truth may, indeed, be regarded as the creative power in forming the system; nevertheless, in the spirit its creative power must be experienced, and there its organizing power must be completed. It is in the mind that the truth develops its organisms.

While Christian social ethics is the product of divine truth and the Christian spirit, it is important to know in what aspect that truth is to be viewed. Faith must apprehend, appropriate, and assimilate that truth. In social dogmatics, faith is addressed chiefly as believing. We have found that faith is the very substance of the Christian life, containing in it, as a focus, all that belongs to religion. It is both receptive and productive, receiving from God and working in his name. In faith are concentrated all the spiritual influences exerted on the believer—they all converge in faith ; and all the influence exerted by him has its source in faith. Now, dogmatics deals chiefly with the apprehending, understanding side of faith ; but ethics is concerned more with the active, productive side of faith. The former turns to God ; the latter to man and earthly affairs. In the one case we have faith as believing ; in the other, as working. In finding the principle of Christian social ethics, we therefore find the principle of Christian social conduct.

Rules of conduct may be potent in their influence. The maxims of individuals and the proverbs of a people are often the embodiment of their speculative and practical wisdom. But if we have nothing but rules, our system of social ethics will be lifeless, a

shell without a kernel. It would be like the preaching of mere rules, which is of no avail, unless the living principle in harmony with the rules exists in the heart. External rules can no more govern than they can create the Christian. If the Christian life had its source in rules, then that life would not be the product of the heart, as the fruit is that of the tree. In this case the Gospel would not rise above the law, and Christ would be a second Moses.

If a State could impart to all its citizens right principles, they would have the power of government within themselves. So to train its citizens that they need no government but self-government should be the aim of every state. If the citizens were of such a character, then the laws would be but an expression of themselves and would be in perfect harmony with them. Coercive and penal laws would not be needed, but only such as would aid the development of the citizens, and give them scope for the exercise of their loyalty and goodness. Christian society in its ideal is such a state ; it is a theocracy, in which God is king and Christians are the subjects. That which makes them the subjects is not the fact that they are under the same rules, but the fact that they have a life and a spirit which are the same as Christ's. They, indeed, have rules of conduct ; but back of all of them, and as their source, they have living principles which need but be developed to overcome all that is wrong. True, this society is not perfect ; nevertheless, however imperfect believers may be, they must have a germ whose growth tends to perfection, and principles such as those which reigned in Christ. They have the law, but in the Gospel ; so that the law itself

becomes an inner, evangelical power. What the prophet Joel foretold is fulfilled in the Christian; God's spirit is given to him as an inner guide. The prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled in Christ's followers: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Instead of coming with laws, which affect men externally, the Gospel gives a new life and spirit, gives living principles, and puts its treasures within a man. In himself, therefore, the Christian has the rule of his conduct. This conduct is the effect, of which the Christian character is the cause. Christ in the believer is the inspiration of his life, as well as his hope of glory.

It is evident, then, that if a man is a believer the rules of Christian conduct will not be foreign to him nor external to him; they will correspond with the law written in his heart, and will, in fact, have their source in his spirit. This does not imply that he can dispense with the written law, for he is not yet perfect. To ignore that law is an abuse of the doctrine that the inner light of the believer is to be his guide. The spirit in him is to be trained by the written law; and in the growth of the spirit it appropriates more and more of that law. Therefore, in proportion as the believer grows in grace and truth will he become a law unto himself. The believer is not above the law written in God's Word; nor is he under the law; nor is he without the law; but he is in harmony with that law. It is this which makes him truly free—the law as an inner, harmonious element, and no longer an outer, restraining, and coercive force. The believer has the Spirit of God; "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The more perfect

the believer is, the more he makes the external law inner; and the more the law is in him the more free he is. Every believer may so grow as to make duty a privilege; which is always the case when his will is in harmony with that of God. In this state, rules are only instructive, not coercive; since for him to know his duty is to do it. And the aim of all spiritual growth is to bring the heart and conscience into harmony, and both in harmony with God, and to make every "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" come from within, and a direct product of the union of the spirit with God.

From all that has been said, it is evident that the believer's conduct springs from the Gospel, has its source in his relation to God through Christ, and is the product of faith. So far is his conduct from being something merely outer or superficial, that it is connected with all that is spiritual within him, and is an expression of himself in his relation to God. But this does not specifically enough explain the social conduct of believers.

It is easy to find the explanation of God's treatment of believers. He is their Father; and this relation implies that love is the controlling principle of God's dealings with them. That this is the correct view is abundantly confirmed by Scripture. This, then, determines the controlling principle of the Christian's social conduct. In him the same spirit is to rule, and God is his law. As, then, "God is love," so also is the believer to be. But the same conclusion is also reached in another way. The Christian view of humanity is that of a natural brotherhood, having its ground in the relation to God as the Father;

Christian society forms a spiritual brotherhood, having its ground in the relation to Christ as the Elder Brother and to God as the Father whose image the children bear. The relations of believers to one another and to humanity are, therefore, brotherly relations ; and the spirit of this relationship is love. Whether, then, we view the believer as having the Spirit of God, or as sustaining fraternal relations, we find that love, brotherly love, is the controlling principle of Christian social ethics. We find the same principle, if we consider that Christ is the source of Christian social ethics ; that the same mind which was in him must also be in his follower, and that his life is the believer's model. If any one word can express all that he is to men, that word is Love. By all these considerations we are, therefore, led to regard Christian love as the seed whence springs the fruit borne by Christian society. And Christian social conduct is simply faith working by love in the social relations. While, then, the apprehending and appropriating element of faith is chiefly addressed in social dogmatics, it is the love-element of faith, and the conduct springing therefrom, which are chiefly considered in Christian social ethics.

In order that a man may have spiritual social power, it is, above all, essential that spiritual love be created in him ; and his power will be in proportion to his love. So in Christian social ethics it is above all essential that this principle, love, be recognized and apprehended ; and in proportion as this is done will the system be perfect. Indeed, when this principle is once fully established, it will be found that all the rest of the system consists in merely showing how

this principle is applied. In order, therefore, to bring out more prominently this germinal principle, we shall examine the teachings of Scripture on the subject. Everywhere it will be found that the New Testament confirms the principle.

If we ask Christ for a summary of the whole law, he answers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Thus, the Gospel view of the law and the prophets makes love their essence. And in the one word love, Jesus concentrates man's whole duty to God and to his fellowmen. In the Gospel of John, Jesus also gives the pre-eminence to this grace. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."† Here the love which is to characterize the Christian is that of one believer for another. This commandment is new, in that it has its source and its model in Christ's love, and in that it is the love between Christian brethren. In the one commandment, to love one another, Jesus sums up all his commandments: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."‡ He thus concentrates all duty into this one, and embodies in it all that he requires of his followers.

When we go to the Epistles, we find that Paul also makes love the fundamental principle of Christian

* Matt. 22 : 37–40. † John 13 : 34, 35. ‡ John 15 : 12.

social ethics. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."* Paul's view of love, in this passage, makes it so comprehensive as to include the whole law respecting duty to a neighbour, and thus he makes it the controlling principle of social conduct. He also calls love "the bond of perfectness,"† and "the end of the commandment."‡ In many other passages he confirms the position here given to love. He exhorts the Ephesians to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." To the Thessalonians he writes: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is Paul's psalm of love. After speaking of the various gifts bestowed on the Early Church, the apostle closes the twelfth chapter thus: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." This more excellent way, which surpasses all extraordinary gifts, is love. Without this love, even the speaking with the tongues of men and of angels, and the gift of prophecy, and the understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge, and faith that could remove mountains, and alms-giving, and the sacrifice of the body in martyrdom, avail nothing. It is love

* Rom. 13: 8–10. † Col. 3: 14. ‡ 1 Tim. 1: 5.

which gives to all these things their Christian significance; and if loveless, the greatest gifts and endowments and deeds are also godless. Summing up the whole matter, Paul says: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Peter also places love on the throne. He says: "And above all things have fervent charity [love] among yourselves."* The apostle of hope thus joins the apostle of faith in making love the chief of the Christian graces.

To give a full view of the significance attached to love by the beloved disciple and apostle of love, would require an analysis of the whole of his First Epistle. The subject of that Epistle is, Christian love in its application to the Christian brother. God's love to us is emphasized for the very purpose of enforcing the duty of the Christian to love his brother. No other Epistle is so rich in the doctrine of love as the controlling principle of Christians in their relations to one another. To John, love is the very essence of religion, while hatred is the essence of irreligion. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him."† "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . . . We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the

* 1 Peter 4 : 8. † 2 : 9, 10.

brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."* The spirit of this love is also described. As Christ laid down his life for us, so "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." It is a love that helps the needy brother; a love that is not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. The very strongest motives for loving one another are presented. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." That is, love alone can know love; God is love, and therefore only those who have love—who love the brethren—can know God. The infinite love of God is a reason for loving one another. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."† Love to God is not possible, unless there is also love to the brethren. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."‡

These clear and emphatic declarations of Scripture leave no room for doubt as to the controlling principle of the believer in his social relations; and writers on Christian ethics generally admit this fundamental character of love. The nature of this love is variously described in Scripture. Every believer knows what it is by experience, though a definition of it is by no

* 1 Peter 3 : 10–14. † 4 : 7–12. ‡ 4 : 20, 21.

means easy. It is not natural affection, which the unbeliever may have as well as the believer, such as the love of relatives or friends, or conjugal love ; but, at the same time, it does not set aside or supersede natural affection, but purifies it. It is spiritual love, being an affection of the spirit of man, and having its birth in a regenerated heart. It is also spiritual in that it is the product of the creative energy of the Spirit of God. Like all other spiritual affections and operations in the believer, it has thus a divine and a human element, being the fruit of the union of God's Spirit with man's spirit. It is truly theanthropic ; and this love is, indeed, the most perfect realization of God's image in man. With God this spiritual love is original ; with man it is derivative, God being its author. "We love him, because he first loved us." But spiritual love in general is not to be regarded as the principle of Christian social ethics, but only that love which is directed to our fellow-men. This Christian social love, as it may be called, has its source in God's love to us, and is co-ordinate with love to God. While, therefore, directly and inseparably connected with love to God, it is yet distinct from it. We may say that God touches the chords of the human heart, and that the response to this touch is both to the Father and to his children ; but it is only the response to his children which is the principle we are now considering.

Christian social love is thus a part, and a very large part, of that spiritual love which Christ awakens in the hearts of believers. The truth with which it is most directly connected is that which may be called sociological, which is, of course, intimately connected

with the fatherhood of God, and with Christ as the Redeemer of man and as the Elder Brother. This love is most closely connected with faith, so far as it apprehends humanity as a brotherhood and appreciates man's calling and destiny. While this love thus receives its inspiration from the Father and Christ, and from sociological truth and faith, its whole aim and working is sociological. It is directed to man as a child of God, and as bearing his image; as one who has a Saviour; as one who is redeemable or is already redeemed; as called to be a brother in the spiritual brotherhood, and as destined for eternal life. The object of genuine spiritual love is always a person, either God or his children. The social love we are considering has the latter for its object.

Not only is the object of this love a person, but this love is also the most perfect expression of the personality; it is the most perfect outgoing of the person toward a person. This love is not merely an emotion, but the whole being is involved and expressed in it; it is an act of the *heart*, using that term in the deep Scriptural sense already indicated. It is, therefore, an act of the whole spirit; it is a thoroughly personal act, and is that act in which the personality most perfectly manifests itself. In love there is always the giving of self—not merely the giving of something that belongs to the person.

A precise definition of this love is exceedingly difficult, it being more a matter of experience than of demonstration, and more a matter of which we are immediately conscious than a matter of explanation or definition. Many feel and intuitively know what it is, who cannot give its verbal equivalents. It has,

however, some general characteristics, which can easily be described.

All spiritual love springs from a heart that has been spiritualized, and is the spontaneous outgoing of that heart toward its object.* Unless the heart is itself spiritual it cannot put forth a spiritual act, and least of all Christian love, which is the highest spiritual act. In order that an object may be loved, there must be an affinity for it in the heart; and in order that spiritual objects may be loved, the heart must feel a spiritual affinity for them, and there must be a spiritual kinship between the loving subject and the beloved object.

Spiritual love must appreciate its object as either potentially or really spiritual. Man without the spiritual faculty could not be the object of this love. But being spiritual, susceptible to spiritual influences, and capable of becoming truly a child of God, he may be loved spiritually. But besides appreciating man as spiritual, this love inclines or bends toward him, takes a deep interest in him, and seeks the realization of his spiritual ideas. There is no love

* "Christian love is widely distinct from any constitutional feeling. We speak of a love of fruit, or a love of beauty—one of the animal and the other of the rational susceptibility—but these are both determined in our constitutional structure. A love of the Lord Jesus Christ is possible only as the spiritual disposition has gone out toward him. So long as the spirit is disposed on some other object, the feeling of Christian love cannot be; there is no susceptibility to it. The religious claims, induced in the apprehension of the truth regarding Christ, are unwelcome, and their pressure becomes irksome, and hence the feeling of aversion and hatred are the necessary result of pressing Christian truth upon an unchristian disposition" (Hickok's "Empirical Psychology," second edition, p. 232).

without devotion to the loved one.* Hence it cannot be idle, but must work for its object, so as to help it to realize its ideal.† The extent of the efforts to be made by this love for the good of others, is indicated by Christ when he commands his disciples to love one another as he loved them; that is, if need be, unto death. The beloved disciple lays down the same rule: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to

* "Love, in general, is the devotion of one person to another" (Rauch's "Psychology").

† "Rational love presupposes a knowledge of the supreme end of the being loved, and involves the choice for him of that end. In strictness we desire things, but love only persons. . . . . Only a rational being can have a supreme end, and the choice by us of that end for another, so as to be willing to put forth efforts, and make sacrifices for its attainment, is rational love" ("The Law of Love and Love as a Law," by Mark Hopkins; 3rd edit. p. 100). In giving the elements of rational love the same author says: "In the whole process and formation of this love three things are to be distinguished. There is (1) a perception of worth as distinguished from worthiness. This involves an appreciation of the capabilities, and also of the liabilities of the being, and can be, only as we know his end, the desirableness of attaining it, and the fearfulness of his not doing so. This is rather a condition of love than one of its elements. There is (2) a 'propension' of mind, as Edwards calls it, and a desire that he should attain his end. This is an indispensable element of love, but not the love itself. It is spontaneous, and may be overcome by other forms of spontaneous action. That it may become rational love there must be (3) a choice for the being of his end, and such a devotement of ourselves to him—that is, to the attainment by him of his end and good—that we shall be willing to make sacrifices for it as we would for our own. It is this last only which constitutes the whole process, rational and free, and brings it under the control of Moral Law" (Pp. 100, 101).

lay down our lives for the brethren."* The extent of this love is also indicated when Jesus says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The love which is the controlling principle of Christian social ethics may be defined as the outgoing of the spiritual heart toward man as spiritual. This indicates both its subjective spiritual origin and the spiritual character of its object. It is thus viewed as a spiritual act of the whole man, the heart being the centre of man. This love implies a spiritual appreciation of the object loved, a deep interest in the object, an earnest desire that it may attain its ideal, and a readiness to sacrifice, so as to aid it in this attainment.

There is another element in this love which is essential to a full understanding of its nature. The heart loves spiritually because it is loving in its nature; for the exercise of this love it is not, therefore, dependent on the love of others. It has already been shown that God's love is original with him, is the expression of a loving nature. For its exercise, God is not dependent on others, but its inexhaustible fountain is in himself. "God is love." Christian love is derivative, being created in the believer by the love of God; or rather, it is reciprocal, since we love him because he first loved us. God's love to the believer makes him loving, creates a fountain of love in his heart, just as there is in God himself. When this love has been created in the heart of the believer he is to love his fellow-men as God loves, for the reason that his nature is loving, and therefore has in himself an irresistible impulse to love.† With reference to God, then, this love is responsive; but with reference to

* 1 John 3 : 16. † See Matt. 5 : 44-48.

other men, it is not merely to be reciprocal to their love, but it is to be original and independent of their love, so that it is exercised toward them even if they are enemies. If the love of the believer to other men were reciprocal only, then who could love first? In that case this love could not exist, for the first Christian love must be original, as there is none yet to reciprocate. Even if the person is only potentially or in idea worthy of love, it is still to be exercised. Christian social love is, therefore, the action of a heart which, in its unworthiness, experienced God's love; and as God loved it, though unworthy, so also is it to love even the unworthy. Its act in loving is, therefore, to be original with the heart, not a mere reaction; it is the native voice of the redeemed soul, not merely an echo of the love of another soul. But it can also be said with truth, that it is the response of God's love.

By màking Love the controlling principle of Christian social ethics, the Second Part of Christian Sociology naturally divides itself into four parts.

I. *The love of the Christian in its application to himself as a member of society.*

II. *Christian love in its social application to others, irrespective of their character.*

III. *Christian love in its application to other Christians.*

IV. *Christian love in its application to those who are not Christians.*

FIRST DIVISION.

THE LOVE OF THE CHRISTIAN IN ITS APPLICATION TO HIMSELF AS A MEMBER OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XI.

SELF-LOVE AND SOCIETY.

THE relation of the individual to society is one of the most important subjects discussed in Christian Sociology, and on it very largely depends the character of social ethics. By generalization, we get four views, under which all the views which have prevailed on this subject in Christian countries can be placed. It may be that sometimes these views have been held in a modified form, or two or more of them may have been combined.

First. The Selfish View.—According to this view, a man ignores the claims of God and of his fellow-men, and lives for self only. He treats himself as if he were independent of his Maker and of other men, and as if he were the centre of the universe, for which all other things were created. He is lord, others are slaves to him. His selfishness determines his relation to others. He cares for them only so far as they promote his selfish purposes.

The selfish view may assume a great variety of

forms. Thus, it may be sensuous, making a man licentious, gluttonous, brutal; or it may be more intellectual, seeking by means of culture nothing more than selfish ends; it may even enter the spiritual domain, seeking religion because it will save from perdition, not because this view cares for truth, and right, and purity, and God. So there may, also, in these different spheres be degrees of selfishness, though in all cases the end sought is selfish.

Whatever men may hold theoretically, practically this view is very prevalent. It adopts the principle that might makes right. It is the principle of the oppressor, whether of the tyrant on the throne or of the master who subjects others to slavery. It is the most frequent source of injustice and of cruelty. In the Gospel, Herod, misnamed the Great, Pilate, the unjust judge (Luke 18 : 2–5), and the rich fool (Luke 12 : 16–19), are types of this class. In history the representatives of this class are innumerable.

Second. The Naturalistic Social View.—This expression is here used to designate that irreligious view which ignores God altogether, but has some regard for the claims of society. He who adopts it regards himself as a member of society, which can exist only by mutual sympathy and help. But however highly he may appreciate the claims of others on him, he ignores the spiritual nature of man, and, consequently, all religious duties to his fellow-men. This is the view adopted by all who treat Sociology as one of the natural sciences.

The socialism and communism of the day are largely an embodiment of this view. They are, as a rule, irreligious; and while they profess to seek solely the

interests of society, they seek only such interests as are purely earthly. There may be socialistic and communistic societies which are religious; these, of course, do not come under this head. The sociology of the day belongs largely to this naturalistic social view.

Herbert Spencer's Sociology is not yet complete, and we do not know what the final conclusions of that work will be. But unless we have mistaken his principles of evolution as thus far developed, he will find no room in his Sociology for the spirit, conscience, free will, or for God. He may use these terms, but we suspect that it will not be in the usually received sense. Like Comte's Sociology, we expect that of Spencer to be a department of physics.

Third. The Monastic View.—Those who adopt this view recognize God, and may be zealous in his service. But it makes this service consist in poverty, chastity, seclusion from the world, and the like. Society and its claims on the individual Christian are either entirely ignored or at least greatly depreciated. The lonely cell, not society, becomes the sphere for the exercise of godliness; contemplation, often idle, takes the place of a faith which works by love; and mortification of the flesh takes the place of sacrifices for the welfare of the brethren. The monastic view may lead to a spiritualistic selfish life.

We must not confound this class with those who retire from the world in order the better to serve society. Nor must all monks be put under this head, for some of them have been great social benefactors. Students who withdraw from the excitement of the world may prove a great blessing to mankind, and

they may seek retirement for this very purpose. Those who in retirement still live for the good of society are not to be put under this head.

It is self-evident that these three views are opposed to Christian Sociology.

Fourth. The Christian Sociological View.—This recognizes God as revealed in Christ, and also the intimate social relations of Christians, and the duties growing out of these relations. The principles of this view are given in the New Testament, and are embodied in Christian society. It recognizes both the individual and society, gives each its proper place, and gvies the claims of each due consideration. This is the view of Christian Sociology.

Now, in adopting this view of the relation of the individual to society, what ethical view are we to take of the individual? We can view him solely with respect to his relations to God, considering only the duties he owes to his Maker; or we can view him solely as an individual, isolated from all society, considering only his moral conduct so far as it relates to himself as an individual; or we can view him as a member of society, and can consider the duties he owes to himself as a member of society and to society itself. The last view is that adopted by Christian social ethics, which treats solely of man's duties in his social relations. The duties which he as a mere individual owes to God or to himself, are not at all to be considered here.

The views of man's relation to society given above will enable us the better to understand what self-love is proper and how it is related to society. It is evident that there is a love of self that is sinful, namely,

a self-love at the expense of love to God and to our fellow-men, or a love to self as if there were no God and no society. Such a love perverts the true relation of things. It is based on a lie, for it denies God and society. This love comes under the first view mentioned above. It is the love of the sinful man for his sinful self, his lower self; not the love of his spirit as made in God's image. As this love has neither its source nor its end in God, but in self, it is godless and selfish.

But to love self as a child of God and as a member of Christian society is not only proper, but also a duty. Such a love has its source, its continuous life, and its end in God. And so far is it from conflicting with love and duty to God and society, that it is in harmony with them and promotes them.

It is natural for the sinful man to love his sinful self. If he abhors his sinful self, it is an evidence that his higher nature is not completely crushed, but has reactive power left. So long as he remains in sin, however, he will love, in some degree, the sinful; for sin cannot do otherwise than love sin. Its love is consanguineous affection. When, however, this self is changed so that the pure image of God is restored, then the pure self will love itself as pure and spiritual, and as allied to the divine.

That this self-love, which is not selfish, is proper, is so self-evident that it is not necessary for Scripture to give special instruction on the subject. Christ takes for granted that men do love themselves, and he aims to purify and exalt this love, so that it may be the true spiritual self, not the lower and corrupt self that is loved. He constantly appeals to this love.

Even when he calls on men to accept the offer of salvation, there is an appeal to self-love. To say that he appeals to their sense of duty only, not to this love of self, indicates that the sense of duty is not understood. That sense of duty is strong in proportion as the love of the true self is strong. If men could and did concentrate all their affection on that which is without them, then they could have no sense of duty. A consciousness of duty implies a consciousness of inner worth, an appreciation of this worth, and affection for it. And the man who has no love of self cares nothing for self, and cannot be conscious of any duty owed by that self. An appeal to a sense of duty is an appeal to self: and if that self is not regarded, then the appeal to duty is not regarded.

Jesus recognizes the right of self-love in the following passages: Matt. 16 : 26, Mark 8 : 36, Luke 9 : 25. The last reads as follows: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away?" These passages, with their contexts, prove that Christ regards true self-interest and duty as in perfect harmony. He shows that self is of more value to a man than the world; and he wants a man to love himself so well, that he will not give himself for the whole world. In the second great commandment of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," there is a recognition of self-love. As far as the lesson is concerned, it makes no difference whether we regard the above as a command to love self, or as merely a recognition of self-love; whether we paraphrase thus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thou shalt love thyself;" or, which seems to be better, "Thou shalt love thy neigh-

bour as thou lovest thyself." Even if it is not a command to love self, it is at least the recognition of the love of self as right. Jesus gives it his sanction by making it the measure of our duty to love our fellow-men. Now, if self-love is the measure of the love we owe our neighbour, then the more of this love we have the better; for it will make the measure of the love we owe our neighbour the greater. According to this standard, therefore, if we could rightly destroy self-love, then the duty to love our neighbour would also cease. Suppose that a man does not love himself; then to love his neighbour as himself means simply not to love his neighbour at all.

Self-love is also recognized in the Golden Rule. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."* Here self-love is made the standard of our conduct toward others, just as above self-love is made the standard of the love we owe our fellow-men.

That self-love is written on man's very nature and is a law of his being is recognized by the apostle Paul, when he says, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."† And all the apostles, in fact, as well as Christ, take this love of self for granted and give it their sanction. This love is, of course, totally different from selfishness, which is destructive of the true love of the true self.

The Gospel, therefore, does not want man to depreciate himself, but it makes him conscious of his real worth; and it wants him to love himself in proportion to that worth. It exalts him far more than

* Matt. 7 : 12. † Eph. 5 : 20.

any other system can do. To understand the estimate which the Gospel places on man, we must view him in the light of God's love for him and of the gift of his Son for his redemption ; in the light of the intimate relation to himself in which he places man; and in the light of the glory which awaits him. True, the Gospel humbles man, but only for the sake of exalting him. And should not he whom God appreciates and loves and exalts, appreciate and love and exalt himself? The Christian ought to realize the fact that already he is the son of God, and that it does not yet appear what he shall be. For Christian social ethics a proper appreciation and love of self are essential, since they are fraught with beneficial social results, just as a depreciation of self must be followed by evil social results.

From the position here taken, it is evident that the duties which a Christian owes society cannot conflict with a right love for self, though they must always conflict with selfishness. The Creator has so adjusted the affairs of the universe that a man's duty and his highest interest are always in harmony with each other. Owing to our shortsightedness, they may, indeed, at times seem to conflict ; but this only seems so, either because our interest or our duty is not understood. It can never be a Christian's duty to do that which injures him as a child of God, which interferes with his spiritual welfare, or which in the least opposes his eternal interests. And could we fully understand time and eternity, we should appreciate the fact, that to do one's duty is not only most worthy of a man, but that it is also for his highest good.

But if self-love and self-interest are both to be maintained at all hazards, how is a Christian to imitate Christ in sacrificing? Does not the Christian spirit of sacrifice require the abandonment of self-love and self-interest? It may be a duty to sacrifice earthly comforts and interests, and even life itself; but we cannot imagine a duty which requires the sacrifice of spirituality or the hope of glory. What duty requires us to sacrifice is selfishness, not self-interest; it is the love of the flesh and of the world, not the love of the true self. Christ himself did not sacrifice his spirituality. His very sufferings are the condition for entering into his glory. He gives himself for and to his own; but this is by no means a losing or an abandoning of self. We may, therefore, conclude that no social duty can interfere with the real interests of the individual Christian.

It is also evident that the Christian owes his first duty to his own soul. On no plea of duty toward others can he afford to neglect that. Jesus everywhere first of all directs attention to self, before he requires efforts in behalf of others. Every one is to seek, first of all, for himself the kingdom of God and his righteousness; then all other things shall be added unto him. To the question, "Are there many that be saved?" Jesus answers, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" intimating that our own salvation is to be secured, before we inquire about the salvation of others. Whatever may become of John, Peter has nothing to do but to follow Christ through duty to death.* Jesus saves his disciples, and imparts unto them his truth and spirit, before he sends them out

* John 21 : 20–22.

to teach and save others. They must themselves be caught before they can become fishers of men. Andrew and Philip must themselves first find Jesus, before they can bring to him Peter and Nathanael. Spirituality thus begins at home, but it is not to be confined there.

The Christian does not love self as separated from others, but as incorporated in Christian society and as vitally connected therewith, and as a member of the whole human family, to which he, accordingly, owes affection and duties. This self-love, therefore, sends out its fibres far beyond itself into the organism, of which the self is a part. And what the Christian seeks for himself, he seeks for himself also as a member of society; and society is benefited by that which benefits him. Christian society is composed of individuals; as the individuals are, so also is the society; the welfare of the individual Christian is, therefore, also the welfare of the society itself. The believer does not receive to hoard in a miserly manner; but he receives for the purpose of enriching others as well as himself. The Christian's self-love can never seek his own interest at the expense of others without becoming selfishness. Not only from the very nature of the case must the growth of the individual also redound to the benefit of society, but the Christian keeps the welfare of society in view while promoting his own spiritual welfare; and thus he consciously labours for the best interests of society while labouring for his own best interests. While, therefore, selfishness destroys Christian society, Christian self-love promotes it. And just as the individual Christian promotes the welfare of Christian society, so, on the

other hand, Christian society also promotes the welfare of the individual. Their interests are so interwoven, that the prosperity or adversity of the one also affects the other. This arises from the fact that they are a living organism. What affects one member must also affect the others and the entire organism. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." There is thus a reflex influence between the member and society; there is action and reaction. Christian self-love, while, therefore, productive of good for others, is also to be receptive of good from society. It gives and receives; it blesses and is blessed.

The Christian's appreciation and love of self demand that he never lose sight of his own worth in Christ while labouring in behalf of others. *That* he must appreciate, if he would appreciate others; and *that* he must maintain, if he would accomplish his mission. No one has a right to lose himself in society. However much he may mingle with others, and sympathize with and labour for them, the Christian ought always to remain himself. His individuality is God's gift; as such he should esteem it and never barter it away. Why should a man try to be some one else, when God has not made him somebody else? Strongly marked Christian individuality indicates strength of character; but he that tries to be somebody else, thereby confesses his own weakness as well as a depreciation of self. Peter cannot be John, nor John Peter; and if John becomes Peter, who is to take John's place and do his work? If any one is to be of peculiar value to society, then there must be

something peculiar in him. If he is only like others then there is no special reason why he should go into society, since others can take his place, and since he cannot give to society what it has not already, nor can he receive from it what he has not. Society, to be beneficial, must be composed of members that have peculiarities. And the appreciation of self, with its proper individuality, is a duty to society as well as to self.

How much time ought the Christian to devote to society? No definite answer can be given, so as to apply equally to all cases. The answer depends materially on the calling, needs, and surroundings of persons. Some are so situated as to be able to devote much time to Christian fellowship, while others can devote but little. It also depends much on inclination. Some have a stronger impulse to seek society, and feel more need of fellowship than others. On the other hand, there are those who are better adapted to solitude, and feel that in retirement they can accomplish more for the good of society than by mingling much with their fellow-men. Richard Rothe speaks of himself* as a "monastically organized individual;" but he wants no monasticism which is not for the good of others as well as self. The scholar may recognize solitude as the sphere of his labours, in which he can do more for society than by spending much time in social converse. The same may be true of a writer. Bunyan, no doubt, did much more for society by writing his "Pilgrim's Progress" than he could have done if he had moved in society all the time.

* Ethick, iv. p. 225.

It must, therefore, be left to the conscience of the believer to determine how much he will mingle in society. But whether one spends his time in solitude or in society, he has no right to lead a life that in no way benefits others. No Christian has a right to put his light under a bushel. Solitude has its peculiar benefits, and society also has its advantages. He that would enjoy and benefit society must know how to appreciate solitude; and he that would derive blessing from solitude must appreciate society. Solitude should fit for society, and society for solitude.

While the Christian recognizes the importance of self, he must also recognize the same with respect to others. I am no more important to myself than another is to himself. And the worth and prerogatives which I claim for myself I must also accord to others. The law which demands that I shall not degrade myself for others, also demands that I shall not ask another to degrade himself for my sake. What my self-love claims for self, that it must also allow the self-love of others to claim for them. Respect for self teaches the reflecting man respect for others. What I ask for myself I must let others ask for themselves. My individuality has rights, and every other individuality also has its rights.

Self-love, therefore, as recognized by Christ, and as altogether different from selfishness, is in perfect harmony with the love of others; and true self-interest is also in harmony with the interests of society. But by the Gospel that self-love only is sanctioned which obeys the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and which practises

the rule, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The Christian's self-love is not a love of self as isolated, but a love of self as a member of society. In this light the individual must view himself, in order to see himself in the proper light. Whatever he does, and whatever affects him, must be considered, not in its relation to him as an individual merely, but as an individual who is an integral part of society. It is common to regard hatred, revenge, envy, jealousy, and the like, as sins against others merely, not as sins against the person who cherishes them. A deeper view will recognize the fact that they are unworthy of a place in the Christian heart, and are a crime against the soul that harbours them. They are in conflict with the principle of love, which is dominant in the Christian heart and which is the fullest expression of the Christian self; they are, therefore, in conflict with the love of self.

Such is the order established by God that a sin against God or against society is also a sin against self. And the highest interest of society is also the highest interest of self. True self-love includes the love of society, of which the individual is a member; and the love of society includes the love of self as a part of society. True self-love, therefore, cannot be selfish, since it seeks the welfare of society as well as that of self; and in seeking the welfare of self, it at the same time seeks the welfare of society.*

* In the work already quoted, Dr. Mark Hopkins says: "Self-love is the choice by any being of his own legitimate good. It is the choice for himself of the good that must come from the activity of his powers in the pursuit and enjoyment of his

supreme end. Benevolence is the choice and will that other beings shall attain their own legitimate good, that is, the good that must come to them from the activity of their powers in the pursuit of their supreme end. . . . The measure of benevolence is the amount of effort and self-sacrifice that any one is willing to put forth and endure that others may attain their end. Rational love as a whole will then include a choice by us for all other beings of their end and good, and for ourselves of our own end and good. It will also include the necessary volitions and activities for the attainment of those ends.

"In the above statement it will be seen that the point of union between self-love and benevolence is the common element of good, that is, of that as their object which is valuable in itself, and that through this they constitute the one whole of rational love. Hence the ground for self-love and benevolence is the same; and hence, too, there can never be opposition between them. On the contrary, they are conspiring forces, not only as having a common object, but as mutually contributing to each other. That form of activity by which we promote the good of others, is, more than any other, promotive of our own good" (Pp. 101, 102).

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIAN SELF-CULTURE IN ITS SOCIAL ASPECTS.

SELF-CULTURE, as the word implies, is the development and improvement of self, of the whole being. If any part of man is neglected, there may be culture, but it will be partial. True self-culture is the unfolding and strengthening of all the powers of man. God makes nothing in vain; all the powers he gives to man are for use. They are alive, too, and, like seeds and germs, they are capable of growth. A human being comes into the world as capacity, power, possibility; and each one is to solve the problem of the direction and development to be given to the power with which he is endowed. And whatever stage of development may here be gained, man is only in the beginning of his career of progress, and every attainment is to be regarded as a stepping-stone to something higher. Every present is the product of the past, and it is also the soil and the seed of the future.

The self to be cultivated is that which God has given, without the mixture of foreign elements, such as sin. If the nature has become corrupt, it is first of all to be purified. It is the true, not the false self that is to be cultivated. The true man is not merely to be developed, but he is to be developed to the utmost, so as to attain the greatest development of

power of which he is capable. In other words, the possibilities of the true man are to be made, by means of culture, realities.

In order that this culture may be Christian, the means used, the object aimed at, and the results attained, must have their source in Christ, and must be in harmony with the Gospel. Truth, divine truth, is the chief element in promoting this culture. But everything which affects the Christian may promote it, since "all things work together for good to them that love God." While Christian culture is chiefly that of the spirit, it is not confined to this, but also includes the training of the body and the intellect.

Not only must every part of man be developed, but every part must also have its proper place, and receive attention in proportion to its value, if the development is to be harmonious. Since the spirit is highest in man, it must be put on the throne, with everything else subordinate. It may be called spiritual culture, or the culture of the spirit in harmonious union with all the other parts of man. That is, the culture of the whole man is to be, in its ultimate aim, spiritual, so that the whole culture may subserve a spiritual end. The spirit is royal, and should sway a sceptre before which all that is material must bow. To make that spirit subject, is to turn a man upside down, and put his head where his feet ought to be.

This culture is misunderstood, if it is supposed to consist merely in the acquisition of something still foreign to us, as Christian knowledge, or new Christian experiences. Just as true education consists in the development of the mind itself, not in merely cramming it with facts and theories; so Christian

culture consists in the development of the soul itself, and not merely in the increase of its spiritual possessions. The soul is not merely a storehouse of the truth, nor is it a mere repository of experience; but it is living, like the plant, and on it the light of truth and the dews of grace fall; it absorbs and assimilates them, and grows thereby. There is real soul-growth. Nature furnishes us illustrations of this growth. The soul is like the seed. It is the seed itself that grows, by assimilating to itself foreign matter, working it into itself, and making it part of itself. The plant does not give up its peculiar nature by drawing nourishment from earth and air, from sunlight and rain. But each plant, retaining its peculiarity by a chemistry of its own, transforms these into its own likeness, making them rose or lily, oak or walnut. The same is true in the animal world. In the one case, corn becomes beef, in another, mutton; in one instance, chicken, in another, turkey. Soil and air, rain and sunlight, do not determine what the nature of the plant shall be; but the plant has the power to transform these and to determine what they shall become. The corn does not determine what the animal shall be, but the animal determines what the corn shall become.

Now, apply this to the soul or to man. The man himself, his own individuality or personality, is the power that is to transform all that affects him into his likeness, and to make it the means of self-culture, or to make it himself. The true man understands the wonderful art of turning all influences exerted on him into the pure gold of his own personality. The culture of self is thus the culture of that which we

have in common with all men; but it is also the culture of that which is peculiar in us, and distinguishes us from all the rest of humanity.

In Christian culture there is thus an acquisition of truth and grace, which are appropriated by the soul and enrich it; but by this very appropriation the soul itself grows, just as the plant grows by that it feeds on. It is therefore proper to speak of the growth of grace and knowledge in the Christian; but it is just as proper to speak of the Christian as growing in grace and knowledge.* Spiritual culture is to enlarge the heart, so that after the growth it can hold more than when converted. Larger souls, more heart, greater and stronger spirits, are aimed at in this culture. By culture, not only is more put into the soul as a treasury, but the treasury itself, the soul, is enlarged, so that it will hold more than before.

In this idea of culture as the development of self, of the personality, there is real grandeur. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus gives the idea of this culture, when he says, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom"—which seed is to grow until the harvest; that is, Christian life is the growth of the Christian for glory. A similar thought is found in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25). The two talents become four, the five ten; the powers which God confers grow by proper use. Thus, by culture a man not only gets more than he had, but he also becomes more than he was. And all true spiritual growth is growth in the capacity to know, to love, to adore, and to serve God.

The common neglect of this self-culture is an

* 2 Peter 3 : 18.

evidence that its duty and importance are not appreciated. Man owes it to his Creator to develop the powers he gave him. To neglect them is conclusive evidence that the powers themselves, and God's goodness in bestowing them, are not appreciated. Their proper use is the best gratitude and the best evidence of their appreciation; and this use is the means of their development. But we also owe the development of these powers to God, in order that we may the better appreciate him, his works, and his dealings with men; that we may the better worship him; and that, by developing his image, we may the better reflect him to the world.

Self-culture is also a man's duty to himself. His love of self demands it. God holds him responsible for the use or the neglect of his talents; but the gain or loss resulting therefrom is his own. He that loves himself will seek his gain, will promote his self-development and the increase of his own worthiness. It is the very law of the faculties to grow; and to promote their growth is God's will and for man's good. To neglect this growth is to neglect self, and is a sin against self as well as against God. As the soul has an intrinsic value—is an end in itself, and not merely the means for the attainment of some other end—soul-growth also has an intrinsic value. It increases the intrinsic value of the individual. Thus, if for no other reason than that of self-love, every one should promote his own self-culture to the utmost.

But the importance of Christian self-culture becomes still more evident, when we remember that it is demanded by love and duty to society, as well as to self and to God. Growth in grace and in knowledge is

the condition for usefulness in Christian society. A man can only give what he has. To give light to others, he must himself be light. A man does what he is. No man wields a spiritual power, unless he has first made that power his own. By digesting and assimilating spiritual truth, spiritual power is developed. Experience is the principal school for religious training; in the laboratory of the heart the influences that come from above are prepared for effective use in behalf of others. As a rule, our Christian influence is in proportion to our own experience of spiritual things; in other words, it is in proportion to our spiritual culture. The Christian's duty to society, therefore, also demands that he seek for himself the highest spiritual culture.

The importance of spiritual self-culture in its social aspects would be better appreciated if the fact were realized that all the power exerted by the Christian depends on his personality. This is the source of all the influence that emanates from him. As this personality is, so also is his influence. Back of all the Christian's words and deeds is his own person, of which these are but an expression, and which gives them their quality and power. The power of the personality may be silent, deep, indefinable, and may be exerted unconsciously; but it is, nevertheless, real and effective. Let men feel that the person is weak or hypocritical, then his strongest words will be empty, and his mightiest deeds hollow. But let it be known and felt, that back of all a man says and does there is a heart that dwells in God, a character that is unimpeachable, and a personality of sterling integrity and great force; then his words and deeds will be

endued with all the power of that personality. The very presence of such a man is power. We thus distinguish between the man himself, and his words and deeds. The man himself is the power, and his words and deeds are but the expression of that power. If the Christian, then, is to be powerful for good in society, he must himself be powerful, and must develop a character of strength and a personality that is weighty. But all this is to be obtained only by the Christian culture of self. The cry of the age is for Christian activity; but this cry will be vain, unless the greater need of Christian men and women, with a grandly-developed personality, is first supplied as the source of that activity.

The intrinsic value of self-culture is frequently lost sight of; and that culture is regarded as valuable only because it is the means for benefiting others; just as by many education is regarded as valuable, not because it develops the man himself, but because it is the means for gaining a livelihood, honour, wealth, or pleasure. Those who do not appreciate spiritual culture for its own sake, but regard it as only the means for the attainment of some other end, will likely soon be satisfied with their attainments, and will hardly covet earnestly the best gifts. In the practical character of the Christianity of the day, some are in danger of neglecting themselves, in their endeavours to benefit others. It is true that this very effort in behalf of others reacts on their own souls for good; but by this means a complete and symmetrical spiritual culture cannot be secured, Indeed, there are not a few whose religion consists rather in *doing* than in *being*. Like Martha, they are "cumbered about

much serving," and are "careful and troubled about many things." They cannot appreciate those who, like Mary, sit at Jesus' feet and learn of him. This "ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." The age needs those who unite in themselves the characteristics of both Mary and Martha.

The very calling of the minister makes him liable to lose sight of the intrinsic value of spiritual self-culture, and to regard it as valuable only because he can use it for the welfare of others. Where this view prevails, the development of the soul will, of course, be neglected, except so far as it is necessary as the means of doing good. He who regards it as his sole duty to impart unto others, cannot appreciate self-growth for its own sake, and he will, consequently, neglect it. He makes the serious mistake of regarding his soul as not an end in itself, but only as the means for the attainment of an end. He will constantly give out, without receiving fresh supplies; consequently, emptiness must be the result. Such a process would empty the ocean itself. The duty of instructing others, of supporting the weak, cheering the faint, guiding the erring, and restoring the lost, may so absorb the minister's attention that he fails to pay special attention to his own soul. And it is really much easier, and frequently more congenial, to try to teach others, than to make earnest efforts at self-improvement. Preaching may be difficult, but it is easier than practice.

> "He is a good divine, that follows
> His own instructions; I can easier
> Teach twenty what were good to be done, than
> To be one of the twenty to follow
> My own teaching."

Though in blessing, he himself is blessed, yet he needs, besides, profound study of the truth, deep meditation on self, and retirement for communion with his own spirit and with God. Jesus sometimes withdrew from the multitude, and even from his disciples, to commune with himself and with his Father. And unless the Christian, whether minister or layman, does likewise, he will neither know nor develop himself; and however zealous he may be in behalf of others, he will be in danger of preferring showy superficiality to the deep things of God.

Some earnest Christian workers are subject to the danger referred to above. Ministers, members of Young Men's Christian Associations, Sunday-school teachers, and all with whom work in behalf of others has become a passion, need to be specially on their guard, that their spiritual self-culture may be proportionate to their zeal to bless their fellow-men. Paul says that he is careful "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9 : 27). And in Rom. 2 : 21, he exclaims, "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" And both passages contain important hints for earnest Christian workers.

What is said here must not be understood as, in the least, a depreciation of efforts to bless others, but simply as a warning against a serious danger. Those who are in this danger should not relax their efforts for the good of others; but they should pay more attention to personal growth, should be careful to remain near the fountain and ever draw afresh from its exhaustless supply. But in order that this may be done, they must learn to love and value the soul for its own

sake; they must learn to appreciate the graces for their own intrinsic value and beauty; they must learn to value the personality, and not merely the outward words and deeds, which are but the tools it uses; and they must learn to appreciate those deep inner qualities of the spirit, which can never find full expression in words and works.*

Those who forget their duties to their own souls, because of their zeal for others, are, however, greatly in the minority. And often the zeal even of this class in behalf of others might be made more effective by proper training. The vast majority of Christians neglect to train themselves with the special aim of blessing others. If the Christian is to do his whole duty to society, then general spiritual culture is not enough. There should be a special training to prepare him to use his powers to the best advantage in society. The difference in the influence of men is often due far less to the difference in their attainments than to the difference in their ability to use what they have. Men with little mental culture, but with great skill in using that little, frequently accomplish much more in society than some with much learning but without the power of using it aright. The same is true in spiritual things. One talent properly invested will gain more than a hundred buried talents.

* Even theology is esteemed by many only as a means for the purpose of blessing others. Were it properly valued, it would be studied by theological students and ministers with an intense thirst for its truths, such as is but seldom found now. And why is it that only those who expect to enter the ministry study theology? Because it is not properly valued as a means of self-culture, but only as a means for benefiting others.

There are many who cannot properly express in words and deeds what is in them, who consequently never do justice to their powers in society. What they need is special training in the use of their attainments. Skill in the use of mental and spiritual power can be cultivated, just as well as the skill of the hand in the use of tools; and the need of this skill is very great. And yet, while the conviction of duty to bless others is very general, how few there are who feel that it is their duty to fit themselves specially to become a social power! Many want to do good who do not appreciate the need of self-development for the accomplishment of this very purpose. With all the progress of the age, it is strange that so little attention is paid to the cultivation of the power of using, to the best advantage, what has been acquired. It seems that a new science is in urgent demand, a science that shall give the laws of expression, using the word expression in its most extensive sense, as applying to look, gesture, manner, language, deed, and in fact, to all the means used to give expression to that which is within a man and is used to influence society. The art of social work, founded on such laws, might be of great benefit to the Christian worker. The aim, of course, should not be to make men hypocrites, but to enable them to make the most of what they have. Jesus wants his disciples to be wise as serpents in dealing with men. This wisdom consists simply in adapting means to the attainment of the desired end. Christ himself is the model of practical skill in the use of spiritual power. Paul has not merely great depth of spirituality, but he also knows how to use it to the best advantage. His Epistles to Timothy and

Titus are especially rich in directions for the use of spiritual attainments. He wants the minister of the Lord to be thoroughly furnished as far as inner qualifications are concerned, such as knowledge, soundness of doctrine, faith and love; but he also wants him to be apt to teach. So much stress does he lay on this aptness that he speaks of it in both Epistles to Timothy.

In our theological seminaries the need of special training of candidates for the ministry in the art of expression, or in the art of using to the best advantage their acquisitions, is recognized. Homiletics and pastoral theology and various exercises have this end in view. It is felt that it is not enough for the minister to have talents; he must also know how to use them. The same need is recognized in training for any profession. To some extent this need of training in the art of expression is felt with respect to Sunday-school teachers. But there are other departments of Christian work in which skilled labour is as necessary. And why should not every Christian be instructed, not merely in his duty to others, but also in the best methods of doing that duty? The Roman Catholic Church gives some of its members special training for works of benevolence; the result is that, in many respects, their benevolent institutions are admirable and worthy of imitation. But not only in ministerial and Sunday-school and benevolent works is skilful Christian labour needed, but in all the spheres of Christian activity. To supply this need is one aim of Christian self-culture in its social aspects, an aim worthy of careful consideration by every Christian.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Christian self-culture, with a view to social ends, requires, first of all, as already intimated, a development of the personality, the soul itself, the character. We must first get knowledge and grace, and then we must learn how to use them. The sculptor must have the marble before he can form the statue; the painter must have canvas and paints and brushes before he can paint the picture. The first requisite for a good writer and speaker is good matter; the second is the style. It is a good rule never to speak unless you have something to say; but when you have something that is worth saying, say it in the best and most effective way possible. First, the matter to be shaped, and then the best possible form for that matter, should be sought. Solid attainments, real spiritual substance, are the first aim of spiritual culture in its social aspects. What we desire to impart unto others we must first of all seek for ourselves. Hence, personal spiritual culture is not only a duty which the Christian owes himself, but it is also the first requisite for the performance of efficient work in behalf of others. Having solid attainments, how can the Christian be most efficient socially? When the artist has all the materials for his work, he must have a clear conception of the work to be done, if he wants to work intelligently and successfully. He must have an ideal in his mind before he tries to embody it in marble or paint it on canvas; and all the skill exerted must be aimed at the realization of that ideal in a statue or a picture. This ideal is, in fact, already to guide him in the choice of his materials, as well as in his skill in

using them. So the Christian, in all his self-culture with a social aim, must have an ideal of the work to be done, which ideal is to be the inspiration of his work, and its realization is the end to be attained. This ideal must guide him in his acquisition of skill in his work. An ideal of the ministry, of Sunday-school work, of labour for the poor, sick, tempted, and fallen, is essential for the rational and effective disciplining of the powers for these different spheres of labour.

The next step is the attainment of skill in Christian work, so that the ideal may be realized. This part of self-culture is, unfortunately, neglected by some who have solid attainments. There are profound scholars and earnest students who evidently think that the substance alone is essential, and that its form is of little or no value. They accomplish but little compared with their real attainments. They take the marble rough from the quarry and throw it at the world, with the expectation that it shall be admired. But the world wants statues instead. As far as the effect is concerned, the form is very important. In Nürnberg there is a statue of exquisite beauty, and greatly admired. And yet the material is only wood. Many a statue of pure marble is less attractive and less valuable. It is its form that gives it such beauty and value. When, therefore, effect is taken into the account, the form is very essential. This is true of sermons, addresses, essays, and all forms of Christian work.

For the attainment of efficiency in Christian social work, the following rules are important :—

1. The Christian should understand himself. In

order that he may use his powers to the best advantage, he must know what those powers are. He should know the exact truth about himself, neither over-estimating nor under-estimating himself, neither being conceited nor lacking the proper confidence in himself. Some men have too modest an opinion respecting themselves, and this wrong opinion interferes with their usefulness. Christian humility does not require a man to believe a lie respecting the powers which God has bestowed on him. Every one should estimate himself according to the truth, and should know to what he is adapted, and to what he is not adapted. The gifts with which God endows men adapt them to special spheres and special work. Now, unless he understands himself aright, how can the believer know what his special mission is? There is to all a general call to serve God and bless men; but there is also a special call to every Christian for special work, determined by his special endowments and surroundings. There is a niche for every one. A man will fit exactly into the niche for which he is made, but into no other. The difficulty is to find one's niche. Men are constantly getting into wrong ones. Some get into those that are too small, and as a consequence they are cramped; others get into niches that are too large, and they cannot fill them. Every one should know his special sphere, and should enter it; for to miss that sphere, and to enter one to which he is not adapted, may be to fail entirely. Peculiar work requires peculiar power; and peculiar power adapts one to peculiar work. Special talents must have special spheres in order to be put to the most profitable usury.

It is wrong for a man to aspire to the highest position within his reach if he is unfit for it. If he occupies it, he will probably keep out the very man that is fitted for it; and he himself is inefficient in that sphere, and is kept out of the sphere in which he might be most efficient, and to which God has called and for which he has endowed him. But it is also wrong for a man to be satisfied with a low position and a small sphere of usefulness if he is adapted to a higher and more useful position within his reach. The great mistakes men make respecting their fitness for certain offices and works prove how little they understand themselves. The failures resulting from this lack of a knowledge of self and from an unwillingness to labour in one's divinely-appointed sphere are innumerable. Many fail, not because they have no talent or energy, but simply because they are out of their spheres. If a mere lack of self-knowledge is the cause of their failure, they will thankfully receive the information that will help them into their proper place; but if a godless ambition that aspires to positions of prominence and trust, without ever inquiring into their fitness, is the cause, then the needed information will only incense them. The hand should not aspire to be the eye, nor the foot to be the head. And yet men, in the Church and out of it, are constantly aspiring to pervert themselves and the end for which God made them; they want to be what they cannot be, and to do what they cannot do. Many of these very men in their proper spheres would be giants; whereas out of their spheres they are only great as failures, and are objects of pity, if not of contempt.

Every Christian should, therefore, study himself and know his sphere. Knowing himself and his calling, and developing himself with special reference to that calling, the Christian, in his divinely-appointed sphere, may expect rich results from his labours in behalf of society.

2. But besides understanding himself, the Christian needs a knowledge of human nature. He that would influence men must understand the human heart, with its deceitfulness and wickedness, with its passions and prejudices, with its capacities and needs and yearnings. To give men what they need, it must be known what they need. He that would deeply move others must know what they are and what they may become ; must know their real condition, and also the possibilities of their nature. For the Christian, the Scriptural view of man is of special importance. Jesus not only knew himself, but he also understood man. " He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man ; for he knew what was in man."

In order to understand the men of an age, the spirit, the wants, and the tendencies of that age must be understood. This is a study of vast importance and also of special difficulty. Men so often misjudge their age, because they partake of its own passions and prejudices and errors. An age is like the eye, which sees other objects, but not itself.

3. Study the fitness of things. The Christian, in his social labours, should know how to adapt himself to persons and occasions, how to adapt means to ends. This rule is based on the former two, a knowledge of self and of men ; it is simply a wise application of this knowledge. The Scriptural idea of prudence is that of the adaptation of means to the attainment of the

desired end.* Solomon teaches the importance of attending to the fitness of things when he shows that there is a special time for every thing and purpose. Ecc. 3 : 1 : "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Jesus lays stress on the fitness of things when he teaches the disciples of John that fasting and joy, new cloth on an old garment, and new wine in old bottles, are not suited to each other. He wants the Jews to know the signs of the times, so that they may adapt themselves to them. Paul knows full well the importance of a proper adaptation of means to ends. "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, ... that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9 : 20–22). "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10 : 23).

The duty of Christian self-culture in its social aspects thus demands the greatest culture of self by proper means and for spiritual ends. And it demands that the attainments be used to the best advantage for society. This self-culture should develop spiritual power, and also skill in its use. And in order that the Christian may know how to use his power most effectively, he must know himself, must understand men and his age, and must know the fitness of things.

* This idea of prudence, or, as our version has it, of wisdom, is illustrated Luke 16 : 1–12; Matt. 25 : 1–12; Matt. 7 : 24–27.

CHAPTER XIII.

DUTIES WHICH THE CHRISTIAN OWES HIMSELF IN SOCIETY, AND WHICH HE OWES THE CAUSE HE REPRESENTS.

THIS is not the place to consider the duties which, in general, the Christian owes himself; but only those duties are here to be considered which he owes himself in society. It has already been intimated that he is not to regard himself as merely an instrument to prepare others to become children of God. He is himself a child of God, bears his image, and is an object of his love; he is a disciple of Christ, and has his Spirit and truth and grace; and he himself has an immortal soul of inestimable worth, and to himself of infinite importance. Well may one stand in awe when he tries to measure the height and depth and breadth of the duty he owes his own being. But more than this: the Christian in society is a representative of Christ and of his Gospel. In the Christian these will be judged. He is viewed as Christ's Gospel unto men; and in him the world expects to read Christ and his truth. If the Christian's influence led men to judge him only, then that influence might be, comparatively, of little importance; but the world judges of Christianity itself, and of its Author, from the conduct of its professors. It is therefore evident

that in society the Christian does not merely owe duties to others, but also to himself and to the cause he represents—duties of great importance and worthy of special consideration.

The chief duty which the Christian owes himself in society is, that he act worthy of himself. Appreciating his own worth in Christ, his conduct before others should be in harmony with his true worth and dignity. This should save him from that levelling influence in society which tends to rob men of their individuality and to make them all alike. The tendency in this direction is very strong ; and unless he is constantly on his guard, the believer will lose that which distinguishes him from all others. In society he must remain himself and must assert himself, in spite of all the social influences that oppose his inherent peculiarities and make their maintenance and self-assertion difficult.

The Christian must be able to be in the minority, even to stand alone, and to be defeated. If he must either give up society or his selfhood, let the former be abandoned. He can better afford to lose society than self. He is not responsible for society; but for the keeping of that which God has committed to him he is responsible. Amid the powerful tendencies to destroy self, too much stress cannot be laid on the Christian duty to maintain that individuality which is the divine stamp on his being.

There is great need of preaching Christian self-reliance. The believer is, of course, supposed to have in him something worthy of trust. As a child of God he has real worth. To himself he must be true, if he is to be a social power. He that is not faithful to self

cannot be faithful to others. A man owes it to himself to be true to his convictions in society at any cost. If he is not, then he becomes the embodiment of a lie.

> This above all—to thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The Christian owes it to himself to be a learner in society, a recipient as well as a giver. Intercourse with his fellow-men should be one of the means of self-culture. And, indeed, if properly used, it will be one of the most powerful and most beneficial of all educators. The example of others, their precepts, the effects of word, look, and gesture, are often very powerful. What a silent, often unconscious, and yet potent influence is exerted on us by those with whom we associate! Their power in moulding our thoughts, feelings, habits, and lives, is incalculable. In order that on us the effect of this mighty power may be beneficial, we must give it the proper direction ourselves. We are not to drift unconsciously on the social current; nor are we to yield blindly to the forces exerted on us by others. A clear aim in life, and a well-defined purpose, together with a resolute determination to make everything bend to that aim and minister to that purpose, will save a man from losing his individuality. To be himself as God intended him to be, and to make everything in society the means of making him more himself—that is the duty man owes himself in his social relations. This, of course, does not imply that he has not imperfections and errors to be removed, and that there are not many things which he can learn and assimilate from others. But he himself must assimilate them, and work them into the

peculiar texture of his being, giving them his own quality and colouring, and making them minister to his Christian aim in life. It is said of Herder, the German poet, preacher, philosopher, and historian, that he made all he learned *Herder*. Now, this is the very thing every true Christian is to do in society; he is to learn the utmost he can from others, but he is to make it himself, transform it into his peculiar being, and he is not to be transformed by it, except so far as he can be changed by it from the wrong and erroneous to the right and true. Not only Paul, but all inspiration says, "Be not conformed to this world." Yet this conformity is, much of it, the very thing the influence of society is constantly trying to bring about.

With the principle firmly rooted in his being that he will be his own master under Christ, not a slave to others, the Christian may learn many valuable lessons in social intercourse. He may gain new thoughts, enlarged views, and fresh impulses to thought and action. The excellences attained by others should not merely excite admiration, but should also lead to emulation. Every good and noble deed is an appeal to us to go and do likewise (Luke 10 : 37). Biography and history have a similar beneficial effect in stimulating thought and exciting Christian emulation. The very faults of others also have an instructive element, and teach us to examine ourselves, to see whether like faults deform our character. Jesus uses the faults of others to teach his disciples to beware, so as not to be like unto them. Empty admiration and uncharitable censure may become habits; but to learn from the excellences and faults of others may also be made a habit. While the former are useless, and worse than

useless, the latter habit becomes a powerful agency in mental and moral training.

The chief duty the Christian owes the cause he represents is, that he make himself as perfect a representative of the religion of Christ as possible. What is implied in being a representative of Christ's religion? It is, surely, not enough to profess it and to comply with its external requirements. Nor is it enough to have this religion merely as an inward power, for that is not representing it. The Christian himself is the representative of Christianity; that is, he himself is a Christian, and his life, which is the expression of himself, is also Christian. In order that he may be as perfect a representative as possible, these two requisites are necessary: he must make his own spiritual growth as perfect as possible, and he must give the best manifestation of his spirituality.

The Christian owes it to himself and to the cause he represents, carefully to guard his reputation. The sentiment, "I care not what people think or say of me," is altogether unworthy of the Christian. It breathes the spirit of recklessness and defiance, rather than of true independence. Even if, for his own sake, he cares nothing about the opinion of others concerning himself, he should have respect unto it for the sake of the cause he represents. If his character is suspected, and if his reputation is weakened or lost, how can he work effectively in the cause of his Master? If his reputation is that of a hypocrite, his influence will be against the religion he professes. If he has the reputation of being positively bad, he may be the means of casting great reproach on the Christian religion. Take the case of the minister who has

lost his reputation; what a stumbling-block he becomes! The same is true respecting every Christian, though in a less degree if his position is less prominent than that of a minister. The Christian is, therefore, under solemn obligation to defend his character by all proper means against unjust attacks.

Jesus and his apostles were jealous of their reputation, and on all proper occasions defended it. All through the Gospel, we find that Jesus defends himself against the accusations of his enemies, guarding that glory which the Father gave him, and which was his due. From the Acts, we learn that Peter, John, and Paul repeatedly defended themselves against the Jews. How jealously Paul guards his reputation is evident from his Epistles. He gives this command, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." Of the minister he says, that "he must have a good report of them which are without" (1 Tim. 3 : 7). To Titus he gives the exhortation, "Let no man despise thee."

But while the Christian is to guard his reputation as a priceless jewel, he must not be morbidly sensitive respecting the attacks of malicious persons, nor must he regard the favourable opinion of others as the greatest good. It is to be sought as means, not as an end. The approval of God is worth infinitely more than that of men, and the latter must never be sought at the expense of the former (Acts 4 : 17). Duty is always higher than reputation, and the approval of conscience is worth more than the applause of men. To make that applause the aim of life is contrary to the teachings of Christ. The Christian, if at all prominent, must expect detractors; and he must not expect to refute every calumny with arguments. If the

charges are such as seriously to injure his usefulness, it may be his duty to compel the slanderer, even by law, to retract them. But many things said about him may deserve only silent contempt. It is a sad commentary on the times, that even the religious press is not free from low personalities and vile calumnies; it has caught the contagious greed for slander. Newspaper attacks often place the sincere Christian in the most trying perplexity. A reply to the attacks may only provoke new ones and really make matters worse. Some things cannot be explained publicly, as the veil of secrecy must not be removed. And many things, even if explained, cannot be properly understood and appreciated by the world. Many lies may have to be lived down. A character of sterling integrity, and a life that is irreproachable, are a sufficient and the best answer to most of the misrepresentations of envy and malice. But even spotless purity is not safe; the very purity may make envy all the more venomous.

> Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou
> Shalt not escape calumny.

Even Jesus did not escape. And some things we may not be able to live down; then, in patience and submission, with a calm yet sublime trust in God, they must be borne. The child of God must never forget his independence of others and his inherent dignity, which is enveloped in God and depends on him for its glory. Such must be the consciousness of his worth in Christ and of his independence that, in defending his reputation, he must never stoop. It is far better to let others do their utmost to degrade him, even without the slightest resistance, than for him to

degrade himself in his defence. All other degradation is but seeming; self-degradation is real. The consciousness of true inner worth is of more value to the Christian than the attributing of worth to him by others. And slanders that cannot be refuted must be borne in the spirit in which Jesus and the apostles submitted to them. It may be a burden that almost crushes. But, resting in the consciousness of innocence, let the believer learn, without warring with the inevitable, to leave his righteous cause in the hands of a vindicating and an avenging God.

While the defence of one's reputation by all proper means is evidently a Christian duty, has the Christian a right to claim honour from men? It is evident that ambition for fame must not be the inspiration of his efforts. Nor is it right for him to seek honour for selfish ends, or for the sake of anything he is in himself, independent of his relation to God. But as a child of God, as one in whom Christ dwells, and as the representative of his cause, he has a right to claim respect and honour from men. Is not the Christian spirit honourable, and does not the Christian character command respect? Undoubtedly. Then why should not the Christian claim that respect and honour which are his due? Worldly honour, which men seek of one another, and which has not the right basis, is wrong; but it is right to seek that honour which comes from God (John 5 : 44). God honours and praises those that love and obey him (Rom. 2 : 29). Jesus says, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Surely, that which is worthy of honour and praise from God is also worthy of honour and praise from men. If the Christian character is the workmanship of God,

then, in honouring the Christian, the workmanship of God is honoured; and the honour which does that the believer ought to seek. The apostle Paul indicates what kind of honour ought to be sought, and in what sense we have a right to praise ourselves: "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15 : 10). This may be called self-laudation; but that he laboured more abundantly than the other apostles was owing to the grace of God, which made him what he was. He therefore seeks for himself only the glory which redounds to the glory of God, and is a reflection of that glory. While he glories only in the cross of Christ, he does not hesitate, in self-defence, to point to the great work he had accomplished. "For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11 : 5).* Those who honoured Paul "with many honours" (Acts 28 : 10) are mentioned with approbation. There are various passages which command that honour be given to others—as these: "Honour all men;" "Honour to whom honour is due" —which show that the giving and receiving of honour are proper. But the Christian must know his weakness and his utter dependence on God; he must realize that he did not save himself, and that all his glory is in and through Christ; and if he seeks and receives honour from men, it must be an honour that honours God in him. The Christian has no right to seek honour in any other spirit. Deserved honour

* The whole chapter is important in its bearing on the subject under discussion.

bestowed on the Christian may be received in all humility, and may increase his gratitude to God, to whom he attributes his glory.

If, however, the Christian, instead of honour, receives dishonour, and is unappreciated, that must not disturb his peace. The fact that God honours him is glory enough.

The reputation of the Christian, and the respect and honour which men accord to him, are an encouragement to greater self-culture, and are also the means of making him a more influential member of society. They are calculated to create confidence in him, and to give more weight to his conduct. In a social point of view they are, therefore, very desirable. And they, as well as all other proper means for exerting a beneficial influence on others, should be sought by the Christian, in order that he may be as powerful a representative of religion as possible. His soul will, of course, shrink from doing evil that good may come, and will abhor the Jesuitical principle that the end justifies the means; but of the lawful things he will, as a wise and skilful workman, choose the most expedient. In his person, and every way, he should strive to make religion as attractive as the Gospel allows, so that it may win men. As the soul is beautified by grace, so the manifestation of that grace is to be beautiful; it is to be a true copy of that grace itself. Love, peace, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness are to be crystallized in words and deeds as attractive as these qualities of the soul. When men see that religion is a blessing, in that it makes its professors better and happier, they will feel that its power is real, and they will realize that the beauty of

holiness is attractive. Christian worship should also be made inviting by its very heartiness and cheerfulness, so as to draw men, and win them to Christ. So to conduct the services of the sanctuary as to make them dull, and tolerable to the stupid only, is a wicked perversion of religion. That may do for dyspeptic religion ; the healthy kind is different. Yet, there are well-meaning persons who associate dullness with true devotion, and cheerfulness with worldliness. It is self-evident that the joy in Christian worship must be in harmony with solemnity, and must be spiritual. There are indications that the time for associating gloom and sombreness with devoutness is past. Christian joy is receiving more recognition than formerly. Even our Protestant churches are losing their barren and cheerless aspect, and are made more ornamental. It is now admitted that æsthetics and religion may go hand in hand. Our churches are frescoed ; there are pulpit frescoes which are intended to be pictures of real or imaginary objects, and sometimes they are successful ; inscriptions and pictures representing Bible scenes adorn the windows ; and flowers grace the pulpit. And this is the case even in Calvinistic churches, where they would be least expected. Our Protestant churches may yet rival those of the Roman Catholics in pictures and other adornments. All this is an evidence that there is a strong tendency to make religion more cheerful. Unless this tendency runs into worldly cheerfulness or mere formalism it must be beneficial. And the joyful Christian in society, having the mind of Christ and being guided by his Gospel, is all the better a representative of the Christian religion because of his joy.

To be true to the cause he represents, the Christian must not degrade the truth. This rule may at first seem of but little importance, but reflection will show how weighty and far-reaching it is. There are sermons and Sabbath-school addresses, as well as other talks on religious occasions, which actually degrade the truth of God. To make the truth effective, it must be adapted to the *capacity* of the hearers; but this does not imply that it must be adapted to their base views and prejudices. It should be adapted to the needs of the most wicked even, but not to their desires. The aim of the adaptation should be the exaltation of the hearers. If presented in an abstract form and in technical language, it may be powerless. Jesus, by his example, strikingly teaches the true method of adapting the truth to men. By means of parables and familiar figures, he makes plain and effective the instruction which might otherwise have been powerless. By his example, he also teaches us another lesson, and that is, never to degrade the truth by presenting it in a manner unworthy of that truth. His illustrations are worthy of himself and of his subjects. They are taken, as a rule, from the common affairs and familiar things of daily life; but they are used to illustrate divine truth, and are free from all that degrades or even suggests the low and the vulgar. He respects the truth of the Father and maintains its divine dignity. His sacred rhetoric is the gold in which the pearls of truth are set.

Judging from the manner in which the truth is sometimes presented, it seems to be the sole aim to adapt it to the hearers, while its own claims are disregarded. The Gospel is, indeed, intended for the

lowly, and it is its glory that it saves the lost. It must not, however, be the final aim of the Christian to adapt it to men; but it should be adapted to them for the sake of adapting them to the truth. It lets itself down to them, for the purpose of exalting them to its own sublime height. But if the truth itself is degraded, how can it exalt men?

The dignity here advocated is that of the Gospel itself, and of a heart in harmony with the truth. An affected solemnity in society and a stilted dignity serve only to repel persons and to breed contempt.

There are occasions when silence is more becoming than the strongest words in defence of the truth. "Jesus held his peace" when witnesses were suborned against him, and when all the parties knew, or might have known, that the charges against him were false. Matt. 26 : 63 : "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered to him never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly." The cause of truth demanded no reply to such accusations as were brought against him. Indeed, to reply to them was unworthy of him, and would have effected nothing. There may be charges against religion which those who make them know to be false, and which the Christian need not stoop to answer. They deserve the rebuke of silent contempt. There are those who are only made worse by the truth, and who degrade it when offered. In the presence of such, Christ's words should be remembered: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under

their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7 : 6). No effort must be made to force the Gospel on such, or on others who will not receive it. "Whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matt. 10 : 14).

Some who are actuated by a mistaken zeal speak of sacred things at the most inopportune times, and injure the very cause they want to promote. They do not understand the fitness of things, spoken of above. It is no apology, that all the Christian has to do is to speak the truth and leave the result with God. It requires great discrimination to know just when to speak and what to say, in order to represent in the best manner Christ's religion. Words spoken at an inopportune moment may repel instead of attracting. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

SECOND DIVISION.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN ITS APPLICATION TO OTHERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR CHARACTER.

WHILE the believer owes special duties to other believers, and also to non-believers, there are general social duties which he owes to all men, whatever their character may be. Whenever he enters society, these duties are obligatory on him, since he owes them equally to the converted and the unconverted. The believer will frequently find himself in mixed society, where both classes are represented, in which case it may be difficult for him to perform any special duties which he owes to each class.

What social relations may the Christian sustain? The answer to this question will make the social duties of the Christian more plain. The following schedule is believed to contain a complete classification of all the possible social relations of the Christian: —

1. The family, including husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and more distant relatives; also other members of the household, such as persons who are received into the family as members of it, and servants. The whole household is thus

included, and not merely the circle of relatives; and all the relatives are included, whether living in the same house or not.

2. The particular church to which the Christian belongs, and religious associations in general with which he co-operates; his own denomination; other denominations; the Christian Church.

3. The social circle in which the Christian moves, including his social relations to friends and acquaintances.

4. The business and professional relations which the Christian sustains.

5. The societies or associations, other than directly religious, to which the Christian belongs, whether benevolent, literary, scientific, or whatever their character may be.

6. Chance contact and acquaintances, as in travelling.

7. The community in which the Christian lives; the town or the neighbourhood, including the political relations to the precinct, ward, county, or district in which he votes.

8. The state and nation to which the Christian belongs.

9. Other nations and the world.

It is self-evident that this classification is not limited to the relations which imply personal contact. Using the word social in its widest sense, the Christian sustains social relations to the world at large; but he cannot hold personal communion with it, nor come in contact with all persons in the world.

From what was said in a former chapter, as well as from this schedule, it is evident that the Christian

sustains other relations than those which are directly religious. While he himself is spiritual. and imparts his own qualities to all his relations ; and while there must be an ethical basis for all those relations and an ultimate spiritual end, still, he must, in some way, enter into secular relations, and attend to the affairs of this world. Though an heir of glory, he is also a citizen of this world, and the secular affairs of men must concern him. As far as consistent with his calling, he is to be interested in everything that concerns humanity ; and he is justly expected to have some share in business, in politics, in education, and the like, even when matters of religion are not directly involved. In all spiritual movements he is, of course, expected to be specially active ; but there his work must not stop. Christians should also be the leaders in everything that ameliorates the condition of men and promotes their welfare, whether physically, mentally, morally, or spiritually. This duty is proportionate to the prominence of a Christian in a community ; hence ministers are to be specially active in all humanitarian movements. Christ healed the sick and fed the hungry, even though the recipients of these blessings did not become his disciples. A similar work was that of the Christian Commission in the army ; it attended to physical wants and sufferings, whatever the character of the sufferer, and whether he became a believer or not. Though Jesus was a spiritual teacher, he did not ignore political relations, but taught men to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, as well as to render unto God the things that are God's. An important command to all Christians, but especially to those who, owing to mistaken notions or to

neglect, fail to use their influence and votes to give to politics more of the leaven of righteousness. What right has the Christian to complain of the corruption of politics, if he refuses to hold office, avoids political conventions and primary elections, and refuses to lift his little finger to remove the corruptions?

Nowhere does the Scripture encourage the neglect of the body or of secular affairs. But in attending to these, it wants the right spirit and proper motive to rule. The body is regarded as sacred, because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and it is to be treated with great care. It is God's gift, a casket into which he puts the soul as a jewel. Attention to secular affairs may be a duty which cannot be neglected without incurring guilt. "And if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Paul did not think it unworthy of himself to labour as a tent-maker. Jesus, before his ministry, probably worked as a carpenter (Mark 6 : 3).

In all his secular, as well as in his religious relations, the believer is to be controlled by the principles of Christ. It is a rule of universal application, never in any relation, by word or deed, by omission or commission, to violate the rules of the Gospel. If the Christian character were perfect, then its spontaneous activity in all affairs would be in harmony with Christ's teachings. But no character is so perfect that it does not need constant watchfulness. The purest and warmest Christian love needs divine grace and the rules of Scripture. The very soul of the Christian's business transactions should be the Golden Rule. The Scripture does not teach political eco-

nomy; but it gives its moral basis, and all the fundamental ethical rules for the dealings of men with one another. There is, in fact, no proper relation in life for which it does not give the controlling principles. Underlying all that the believer does, is the rule: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Here the grand aim of life is given, which includes every other aim as subordinate and subservient to it, and which is to control the Christian in his secular as well as in his religious affairs. Worldliness is at variance with the Christian character, and is opposed to the apostle's rule: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The affairs of this world are to minister to the spiritual, and not the reverse. They are, therefore, secondary. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The relation of the secular to the spiritual is similar to that of the body to the soul. Undue care and anxiety respecting worldly affairs are contrary to the Gospel, as well as in opposition to the Christian's trust in God (Matt. 6 : 25–34).

Now, if the Christian is in that business sphere to which God has called him, and does his duty in that sphere, he ought to feel that even in his business he is serving God and has the divine approval. To attend to that business is a duty, and it is the fulfilling of a part of his divinely-appointed calling. It is part of the Christian's religion to be diligent and faithful in business. Jesus makes his disciples fishers of men;

but he also commands them on the Sea of Galilee: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." And as fishers in both senses his disciples obey his commands. The divine service in the sanctuary is but a very small part of the Christian's divine service. His business is divine service; and he has a right to all the sweet and peaceful assurances which come from the consciousness that his faithfulness in business is truly divine service. Thus religion is to exalt secular affairs to its own sublime height, and to make them an element in the Christian's high calling in Christ. But prayer and constant watchfulness are necessary, lest secular affairs draw his religion down to the level of worldliness.

The aim of social intercourse is a subject worthy of careful study. The Christian's aim in society should be the most worthy, and should be so clearly defined to his own mind as to control him in all his social relations. This subject is all the more worthy of serious thought, because so many have no special aim in entering society, while others are controlled by unworthy motives. The result is, that society is often aimless, and frequently its influences are injurious rather than beneficial. Because so many of its features are objectionable, there are earnest souls who withdraw from society; they are the very ones, too, who could best give it the right leaven. Frequently the conversation is trifling and inane; individuality is repressed, and the tendency is to bring all to the same level of so-called social propriety; instead of giving expression to the true self, many act a part and cultivate hypocrisy; compliments are given which would be branded as lies, were it not that everybody knows

that they mean nothing, and are intended as empty sounds; instead of heart, external formality rules; a lack of real refinement is more readily pardoned than a violation of some senseless conventionality; the graces made most striking are those which are purely external. There is, indeed, much society that is far above this, and is a good Christian school to those who enter it. But the above gives the characteristics of a large part of society. Every true man feels that it is hollow and false, and that time spent in such frivolities is worse than wasted. But the remedy is not found in withdrawing from all society, and in railing at it; but in entering it with right motives, and in communicating to it the proper spirit. He who has a firm Christian character, and positive, aggressive Christian qualities, is not only proof against the contagious influences of such society, but he has also in him the elements for its reformation; and he owes it to himself, as well as to society, to exert that reformatory influence. And in this respect the responsibility of the Christian is in proportion to his position, his influence, and his advantages.

It is evident that no social relation or intercourse of the Christian is justifiable, unless it in some way benefits either himself or others. This does not imply that the benefits are so palpable as to be evident to all, or that they are to manifest themselves at once. Many of the best influences of society are silent and imperceptible. But, nevertheless, it is true that unless good comes from social influence, it is of evil, and should be avoided.

Even as a means of recreation, society may be very beneficial. By social intercourse the spirits may be

cheered and the soul refreshed. Society may thus be a relief from the severe labours in solitude, and may be the means of fitting the better for their performance. As solitude may fit one to become a better member of society, so society may fit one for more perfect work in solitude. The Christian has a right, therefore, to seek in society proper and needed recreation.

The social nature of man has legitimate claims for satisfaction and development. Its proper exercise is possible only in society. The wants of the social nature should be supplied, and its proper cravings satisfied. In the proper exercise of this nature there is pleasure as well as benefit. The pure social joys the Christian should both share and promote. He should be of all persons the most cheerful in society. In the very exercise of the social nature, and in the joys resulting therefrom, there may be the healthy development of that nature, as well as blessings to the whole man.

But it is evident that mere recreation and the exercise of the social nature are not to be the sole aims, as they are by no means the highest. The believer should receive from others the best they have to give, and he should impart to them the best he has. In society the Christian should aim to reap spiritual blessings, and also to bless others spiritually. Between himself and others there should be real reciprocal communion.

There are social gatherings in which the eating and drinking are evidently the most important elements of the entertainment. Perhaps days of anxiety and hard work have been spent on the part of the entertainers

to prepare the feast. There may be great expense and much waste in connection with the whole affair; and the motive may be partly love of vain show, partly of rivalry; and it may be that the whole display is largely the product of vulgar taste. Where the feast is all on the table, the guests are treated much like animals, and they are expected to come and gratify their appetites. They are not treated like intellectual or spiritual beings, who care for the higher elements of social entertainment; hence the conversation and real refined sociability are secondary. The guests are treated as if they came to eat and must be fed. Such an entertainment is an insult to a man of intellectual and spiritual culture, and he may very properly refuse to enter society where the chief aim is to feast the body. It will be a favourable sign when men shall value society for its social joys and its elements of culture, and not for its show, or for its bodily feasting. To the true man it is a compliment to be treated in society as if his bodily wants were simple, and as if his nobler nature craved more attention than the lower.

From the very nature and relations of Christian society we learn the ground or reason of Christian sociability. Christians have much in common with men of the world, such as faculties and powers, business and political relations and pursuits, and social interests and aims. These form a common basis on which Christians and men of the world stand. And though there is a radical difference on the subject of religion, in all other respects they may have so much in common as to make their attractions for one another very strong. Mutual sympathy, whether personal or in

taste and pursuit; a need felt by the one which the other can supply; and a desire to help and benefit, may be strong sources of attraction and the grounds of sociability between Christians and men of the world. Outside of religion, there may be more sympathy and fellowship between them than each finds with members of his own class. As the relations between them may be very extensive and intimate, so their sociability may be equally extensive and hearty. The non-believer also has a spiritual nature, and may take an interest in spiritual matters. This is a basis for the religious element in sociability between Christians and non-believers.

Besides the usual ties that bind man to man, the Christian is united to fellow-believers by Christ, that bond which makes them spiritual brethren. Here is a bond of union, an intimacy of relation, a power of mutual attraction, a sympathy for one another, and oneness of faith and affection and pursuit and hope, which cannot exist between the believer and the non-believer. These differences in relation also constitute the difference in the grounds of sociability. That which is common to the Christian and the man of the world is their humanity; but that which is common to Christians is, besides their humanity, also their Christianity.

Resting on this basis, what is the aim of Christian sociability? Partly the believer's desire to satisfy a want in his nature, a craving for intercourse with his fellow-men. He feels the need of communicating unto them, and of receiving communications from them. But besides this craving, there is also a consciousness on the part of the Christian that this inter-

change of thought and feeling may be the source of great improvement. The Christian may receive from others what he lacks, and he may communicate unto them what they lack. Christian sociability may be made one of the most powerful agencies for the promotion of Christianity. For this reason the study of its laws is so important.

In Christian sociability, the general aim of the Gospel ought to be kept in view, since this sociability is one of the means of promoting that aim. This is nothing less than the Christianization of the world and the universal reign of Christ. This grand aim must be realized in order that the mission of the Gospel may be comprehended, and that Christians may comprehend the greatness of their work. The Gospel was not intended for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also ; it was not intended merely for the age in which it was first proclaimed, but for all ages. This, of course, does not conflict with the view that there are in it some things which were specially adapted to those who first heard it. In its essence, however, it is not national, but universal. Its principles are as universal as human nature, and the supplies it offers are as universal as human needs. It is adapted to all men, in all ages, in all conditions, and under all circumstances.

This universality of the character and aim of the Gospel should be kept in view by the Christian. Whatever the immediate aim of his activity may be, the ultimate aim of all Christian work should be the universal triumph of the Gospel. The leaven which Christ introduces is adapted to leaven the whole human family, and it was introduced for the very purpose of accomplishing this work. This character

and aim and mission of Christianity should be embodied in Christian thought, so as to inspire and enlarge and control Christian activity; and Christian institutions, Christian preaching, Christian effort, and Christian hope should be permeated with this idea. A less comprehensive view of the mission of the Gospel does injustice to it and interferes with its operations. In this aim every Christian is to have a part. And however feeble he may be, and however limited his influence, this universal and eternal aim is to be the inspiration of his sociability and of his Christian social ethics. And we know that God gives believers no mission which he does not give them the ability to perform.

The ultimate aim of Christian sociability is, therefore, not merely to exert an influence on a few, but to Christianize the masses. Believers are the leaven, and the world is the lump to be leavened. In a free country, where the people rule, it is specially important that the masses be leavened with the principles of the Gospel. This world-wide aim of the Gospel should be kept in view in Christian social intercourse, and should control the believer in his social relations. To aid in accomplishing this, he should make his spiritual influence as extensive and as intensive as possible. In this aim the believer will be materially aided if he always keeps in view that he is dealing with those who are made in God's image, and who, however debased they may be, have souls. In the worldly, as well as in the godly, the man, the spirit should be recognized. He may be an enemy, but still he is a man and a brother, one for whom Christ came, and who is a child of God. The believer is, therefore, to penetrate through the surface to the very

core of the being, and is to appreciate a man according to his inherent worth, not according to his appearance. This view would, of course, change society greatly, and it would establish real distinctions in place of the artificial ones which now prevail. And it would also change the life of some congregations which spend vast treasures to secure buildings in which they may worship God aristocratically, and from which the less wealthy are virtually excluded. If men were judged according to their inner worth, it would put an end to churches which are now cursed with the dry rot of aristocracy, and which help to promote godless communism in our cities.

The duties of the believer to men in general, irrespective of their character, are in brief as follows:— He should be sociable and should use his social power for the purpose of conferring on men spiritual blessings; he should, in society, invariably manifest the Christian character; he should respect the rights of others; he should sympathize with and relieve the suffering; he should be charitable in judgment; and he should be forbearing and forgiving.

The order of his social duties to others is as follows:— He cannot influence all men, nor does he owe the same social duties to all. His first duties are to those most intimately related to him. His own family, his relatives, his intimate friends, and all with whom he is directly and personally connected have the strongest claims on him. With them his influence is to begin, and from them it is to extend throughout an ever-enlarging sphere. That the home is to be the scene of the Christian's greatest spiritual influence, and that the process of extending that influence is to be from the near to the remote, is God's own order; it is the

method which he himself marks out for us by placing us into nearer relations to some than to others. Where other things are equal, those who are the most needy have the greatest claim on the Christian, and to them he owes special social duties. There are some, too, whom he can influence more than others; and this very influence indicates that the call of duty directs him specially to them. Thus, his social duties as a Christian are in proportion to the nearness of others to him, in proportion to their need, and in proportion to his influence over them.

Repeatedly the Golden Rule has been mentioned as the law of Christ with reference to the treatment of others. It makes love to self the standard of conduct, and teaches man to treat his fellow-men as he wants them to treat him. The excellence of this rule in social ethics is apparent. But Christ lays down another rule which also makes love to self the standard of social conduct. It is this: *Do unto others as you would have God do unto you.* In the Sermon on the Mount this rule is taught as well as the Golden Rule, though it has very generally been overlooked. Christ there teaches: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* Here it is plainly taught, that if we want God to forgive us, we must forgive our fellow-men; that is, we are to treat our fellow-men as we want God to treat us. The same loving, forgiving spirit which we want God to manifest toward us, we are to manifest toward our brethren. The rule is, then, that, as far as possible, we are to be to others what we want God to be to us. This

* Matt. 6 : 14, 15.

rule is sublime, deep, far-reaching, and full of inspiration. Like the Golden Rule, it is destructive of selfishness, and implies that the believer is interested in the welfare of others as well as himself; that he wants them to be the recipients of the same blessings as those conferred on him; and that he is ready to do his part in making them partakers of these blessings. It implies also that the believer is in harmony with God and is ready to do, according to the measure of his capacity, what God does. The rule is fundamental. Its light illumines all the social ethics of the Gospel. It is Christ's aim to make men like God in character, and like God in activity. The Divine comes to the human, in order that the human may come to the Divine in being and in life. The same mind which is in Christ is also to be in the believer, and likeness to God is the stamp of the Father on his children. Be like God, do like God, is the highest rule of the Gospel.

The fundamental law, that we are to do unto others as we want God to do unto us, is very potent if grasped by the heart of the believer. It enables him to understand the Lord's word to Moses: "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh."* Moses stood before the king in God's stead. And of every believer it may be said, that in a similar sense he is "a god" to others—is in God's stead, representing him, manifesting his will, doing his work. Does this seem to border on blasphemy? Is the believer in Christ to be put beneath Moses? Jesus himself puts the least believer above the greatest of the prophets: "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:

* Ex. 7 : 1.

but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

The rule is universal in its application, giving the law for the believer in his conduct toward all men, and in all relations and circumstances. When we know what we want God to be to us, then we also know what we are to be to other men. If we want God's love, then we must love our fellow-men; a truth so emphatically taught by the beloved disciple. If we want God's forgiveness, then we must forgive all who have in any way injured us, which lies at the basis of all Christ's teachings respecting the love of our enemies. If we want God's mercy, we must be merciful: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." And if we want any blessing from God we must bless others.

The rule is also important in connection with prayer. God wants no selfish prayers, and it is an insult to ask God to do for us what we are unwilling to do for others. God wants a heart which as greatly longs to bless others as it longs to receive blessing. Genuine faith, like the moon to the sun, turns to God for light, and then turns to men to communicate that light. So many prayers are amiss, because they spring from hearts which are unwilling to be to others what they desire God to be to them. The believer's prayer is the inspiration, as well as the law, of his conduct. Praying and working, working and praying, and working as he prays—that is the Christian's life. Often God sends men to answer their prayers, making them do what they ask him to do. They pray for the Church, or Sunday-school, or society, or for their family, and God sends them into these to work in his

* Luke 7 : 28.

name and to become the agents for the answer of their own prayer. Men pray for missions, and God makes them or their means answer their prayers. So the rich pray for the poor, and God sends them to dispense of their abundance unto them.

As one meditates on this rule, its grandeur grows. It brings the believer so very near God, and for this very reason it brings him so near his fellow-men. Is one in doubt what to do? Let him ask what God would do under the circumstances, and what he would desire of God. Especially does the believer go to God for spiritual gifts, and that teaches him what he himself is especially to bestow on others.

Since love is the controlling principle of Christian social ethics, it is not surprising that in love especially believers are exhorted to be like God. His love to his enemies is the model for the Christian, and in this love the believer proves himself a true child of God.* The exhortation, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"† is shown by the context to refer to love, and that love as specially manifested toward enemies. The love of the Father and of Christ is very frequently made the believer's model. "And be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Be ye followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."‡

* Matt. 5 : 44, 45. † Matt. 5 : 48.
‡ Eph. 4 : 32; 5 : 1, 2.

THIRD DIVISION.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN ITS APPLICATION TO OTHER CHRISTIANS.

1. *What is it that the Christian loves in his fellow-Christian?* It cannot be his soul merely, for the Christian is to love the souls of all men. The Christian's love for the brother is peculiar, different from his love for others. Its source is spiritual, and its object is also spiritual. The Christian loves in his brother that which makes him a Christian. It is the image of God restored to its purity by Christ. The object of this spiritual affection is, therefore, the regenerated soul of the fellow-believer.

There is a marked difference between Christian love as directed to Christians and as directed to non-believers ; and it is important to note the difference. Whatever the basis of natural affection may be, whether consanguinity, or acts of kindness, or personal qualities, Christian love or spiritual affection is always directed to man as either redeemed or as redeemable. While in the Christian brother this affection loves the soul as forgiven and as bearing the impress of Christ's image, it loves in the unregenerate

the soul as redeemable, though still sinful.* The difference in the objects loved—the redeemed soul, and the unredeemed but redeemable soul—makes the difference between spiritual affection as directed to believers and to non-believers. In the New Testament this difference is recognized. The word "agape"† is used for love in general, whatever its character may be. But for the love of one Christian for another, a special word is used, which is applicable to no other kind of love. That word is "philadelphia," ‡ brotherly love, the love of the Christian for the Christian brother. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you." "Let brotherly love continue."§ The use of this word solely for "brotherly love" shows that the apostles distinguish that love from all other kinds of affection.

This brotherly love is a love of consanguinity, as the name "brotherly" implies. But it is a spiritual consanguinity. It has already been sufficiently indicated, in a previous chapter, what the relationship is. Christians, as has been shown, are a family, in which the members are related as brothers and sisters. This relationship has its basis in the fact that all are united to Christ as the Elder Brother, and through him to God as the Father of the family. Now, just as in the natural family, when all the members are true to one

* Can the Christian cherish spiritual affection for a soul so abandoned as to be hopelessly lost—one, for instance, that has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost?

† *ἀγάπη.* ‡ *φιλαδελφία.*

§ It is also used Rom. 12 : 10; 1 Thess. 4 : 9; Heb. 13 : 1; 1 Pet. 1 : 22; 2 Pet. 1 : 7.

another, natural love unites heart to heart; so, in this spiritual family, spiritual love binds together the souls of the members.

Owing to the imperfections of Christians, this spiritual affection is often very imperfect; just as natural affection is in the natural family. The love of the Christian for a Christian brother as a Christian, and simply because he is a Christian, is not sufficiently reflected on by Christ's disciples, and is not sufficiently cultivated. Our likes and dislikes, our mental and æsthetic preferences, and our prejudices, are apt to influence us far more than Christian love in its purity. That is, our natural inclinations are so strong as to interfere seriously with our spiritual affections. Instead of making Christ and his word the standard of affection, we are apt to make ourselves, with our imperfections, such standards. And we are apt to love others, not according to their worth, nor according to the impression they make on our spiritual natures, but according to the impression they make on our senses; which proves that the natural is not yet entirely subject to the spiritual. Where spiritual affection is pure, it will love all that are spiritual, will love them for the sake of their spirituality, and in proportion to their spirituality.

2. *Christian Fellowship.*—Love naturally seeks the object loved. It seeks to possess this object, and also to communicate itself to that object. The Christian religion, with love as the controlling element, draws believers together. In the heart of the brother the believer finds the counterpart of much that reigns in his own heart, at least the fundamental principles of religion which make the Christian a Christian. Chris-

tians can, therefore, understand one another, as the world cannot understand them. Every Christian has beliefs, emotions, impulses, and experiences, which the worldly man cannot appreciate. And to the ungodly these cannot be communicated. However intimate the believer and non-believer may be, that which is deepest and most precious to the believer must remain a mystery to the other. But to other Christians they are not a mystery, since there is something similar in their own hearts. Christians are kindred souls, and each in some measure reflects the other. All that is best calculated to beautify and ennoble the soul forms the basis of their spiritual affinity and of their real oneness. Christian communion is therefore natural. From the brother the believer may expect appreciation and sympathy and help.

But even to the brother the Christian does not reveal all the treasures of his heart. Even where the communication is the most perfect, it is not an exhaustive expression or revelation of the soul. Our very means of communication at best are so imperfect that much which is said is liable to make wrong impresssions ; while often only hints can be given, from which the truth must be guessed at. And the deeper the experience of the Christian is, the more there is in him that is incommunicable. Every heart has its loneliness, in which it cannot communicate with others, and deep hearts have their vast and sublime solitudes, which the dearest friends cannot enter. While the Christian thus has a holy of holies within, which none but Christ, the great High Priest, enters, he must, of course, withhold something from even the most intimate brother. But still there is much that seeks

communion and that is communicable. In this communion there are degrees, dependent on the correspondence of souls. In some cases there is little more than external contact and a communication in formal words. There are those who seem to lack the qualities of intimacy and the gift of deep spiritual communion. Sometimes the repellent forces of two natures are more powerful than the attractive forces. Between such natures communion is necessarily superficial, and may never rise above duty and effort into the region of privilege and spontaneity and joy. In others the very souls seem to coalesce, the communion is rich, and deep, and full of heart, and the sympathy is warm and living. In this real Christian fellowship, where heart beats in unison with and in response to heart, we find the highest type of Christian communion, such as existed between the Saviour and the beloved disciple.

The conditions for this highest Christian fellowship are kinship of souls and developed Christian graces, especially deep love. When such spirits meet (for it is a real *meeting* of spirits), each seems to find in the other the very counterpart of himself. That such meetings are so rare, is probably owing as much to the artificialness and imperfection in communion as to the rarity of such natures. It often takes time and effort to get through the established formalities and so-called proprieties of life or society, down to the deep of the soul. But even if these external barriers were removed, it would be found that the real differences between Christians are such that there must be degrees in spiritual intimacy. From a number of equally pious persons, the Christian may choose but

one as his soul-friend and heart-companion, for the reason that he is most congenial spiritually, and can enter more fully into sympathy with him than the rest can. A pastor may love all his people, and do his duty to all; and yet he may be more deeply attached to some than to others, just as Jesus chose Peter, James, and John from the twelve to be his most intimate friends. The mutual love of Christians, and their oneness of spirit, should make them congenial; but they can no more be equally intimate than men of the world can. When we remember the imperfections of Christians, and the marked differences between them in spite of the underlying unity, it is not at all surprising that, while we love all, there are degrees in this love, and that among the many there are a few with whose thoughts and aims and emotions we can sympathize far more fully than with those of the rest. It is not necessarily our fault, nor the fault of others, that we cannot be equally intimate with all Christians; it is rather an arrangement which God himself has ordained. But the unity underlying Christian society, and the sincere love of the believer for all the brethren, make some degree of spiritual communion possible between all believers. And frequently believers who are strikingly diverse in character may be most intimate, the one seeming to be but a complement of the other. In the meeting of such souls the Luthers and Melanchthons find each other.

But while recognizing to their full extent the necessary differences in the fullness and intimacy of Christian fellowship, everything that enters into this fellowship may be cultivated, and there may be growth in the heartiness of communion, even among those

who seem to be least adapted for intimacy. Christian sympathy and trust and confidence, like Christian love, are capable of great development. Even the inclination and the will, so far as they are concerned in the matter, are susceptible of cultivation. But in order that the powers may be so developed as to make Christian communion more intimate, the believer must know what is required of him. One of the best means of promoting this culture is the study of Christian Sociology. This fellowship will be promoted by reflection on the things that unite Christians, and by studying to appreciate in others that which makes them different from us. There is also a possibility, as well as need, of cultivating the means of communication between Christian hearts, so that there may be a development in the communion itself, as well as in the internal conditions for that communion.

Every believer should have in his mind an ideal of Christian fellowship. In the formation of this ideal the First Epistle of John is of special importance. When the Christian has formed this ideal in his mind, he should apply the best means to make the communion with the brethren correspond with that ideal.

In order that this communion may be the most profitable, it must have the proper aim. What, now, is the aim of this communion?

Some degree of Christian fellowship is a necessity for every healthy Christian heart. Just as the devout soul feels an irresistible impulse to seek God, and to hold communion with him, so does it feel a similar impulse to hold communion with fellow-Christians. Christian love is communicative, and seeks to impart its light and warmth to other Christian hearts; and it

also longs to appropriate the Christian treasures which others can impart. And the communion is precious, and the treasures imparted are valuable, in proportion to the spiritual life of Christian society. In the Early Church the fellowship of Christians was specially deep, which is also the case now in seasons of genuine revival.

Christian fellowship should be spontaneous, the natural outgoing of a warm, full, and sympathetic heart. But it is by no means blind spontaneity, since it has distinct ends in view. An appreciation of these ends will serve to make the fellowship more worthy and more profitable. By the communication of our views and experiences, we ourselves are made more fully conscious of them. What we express in words assumes to our own minds a more definite shape and a more distinct form than that which we merely think and feel. Christian communion brings the heart into exercise, and thus develops it. The very effort to impart to others promotes the culture of self. Where there is action in behalf of others, there is also reaction on self. So that for the sake of his own growth in grace the believer should cultivate Christian fellowship. The minister who succeeds in making his members talk about their spiritual state will do more for their culture than the pastor who only talks to them on that subject. Conversational meetings in churches may be powerful auxiliaries for developing the members.

But besides his own personal benefit, the believer seeks, by communion with other believers, to bless them. The advantages thus sought are mutual. By our experiences we may strengthen and encourage

others. Our griefs may serve to soothe their griefs and our victories may inspire them with hope, and nerve them for the conflict. The edifying influence of Christian fellowship will be better appreciated when we consider that God uses human agencies to build up his Church, and makes Christians the channel through which many of his mercies flow to other Christians, as well as to men of the world. Young disciples, the weak, the disappointed, the tried, and the neglected, are the ones who most of all need this fellowship.

In the influence of Christians on one another, the aim is to accomplish a twofold work, negative and positive. All Christians are imperfect, needing the removal of some things and the addition or increase of others. To destroy what is wrong, and to supply what is needed, this is the condition of all spiritual progress. In Christian fellowship, therefore, the influence is to be both destructive and constructive. In all spiritual life there is death; but it is a death that promotes life. Christian growth is a tearing down for the sake of building up, a rooting out for the sake of planting seed and of promoting its growth.

The Christian must not expect full appreciation from all the brethren in his fellowship with them; and he must not imagine that he fully appreciates them and does all of them justice. He may, in fact, often be misunderstood and depreciated, and his best intentions may be sadly perverted. This is owing partly to the imperfections of Christians, and partly to the imperfections in the means of communication.

3. *The social duties of the Christian to his fellow-Christians.*

These duties grow out of the intimate relation existing between Christians, and out of their relation to Christ and his cause. They are duties which cannot be performed as if the obligation were merely legal, but they must be performed in the spirit of Christian love. It is self-evident that these duties cannot all be mentioned here, nor can any of them be discussed in detail.

a. The believer must respect the Christian liberty of his brother in Christ.

The far-reaching importance of this duty and its evident neglect, justify the fact that it is here placed at the head of the duties of the Christian to his brethren.

All men have rights which the Christian is bound to respect. "In the presence of another man, without any external law, without any compact, it is sufficient that I know that he is a man; that is to say, that he is intelligent and free, in order to know that he has rights, and to know that I ought to respect his rights, as he ought to respect mine. As he is no freer than I am, nor I than he, we recognize toward each other equal rights and equal duties."* The very fact of personality gives a man rights and privileges with which no one can rightly interfere, and which God himself respects in his dealings with men; and the fact of personality gives a man claims on others which they cannot rightfully ignore.

Many of the disturbing and destructive influences in society are traceable directly to the ignoring of the just claims of others. One man has as much right to his peculiarities as another, provided they are a true

* Cousin, "Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good." Lecture 15.

expression of his original personality. His original constitution is not his own work, and he is not responsible for it, though he may be for the manner of its development and use. So far, then, as his peculiarities are natural and an expression of his peculiar personality, they have as much right as the natural peculiarities of others. In society there are not mere units, but there are persons, or personal units, of which no two are alike. Each person has the power of self-determination in himself—a power that may be modified by other persons and by circumstances, but which should always retain its freedom, and be governed by the personality. Where one member of society sets himself up as the standard to which all others are to conform, and arrogates to himself the right to be an infallible judge of others, he adopts principles that make all society, in the true sense, impossible. If one may do this, why may not another; why not every member of society? If one personality is to have all rights, and no other personality any, why may not every personality claim to be the one that has all rights? This is the principle of all selfishness, of tyranny, and of slavery; this is the principle which denies the personality of others, which tramples on their liberties and ignores their rights, and which makes of self a god which all others are expected to worship.

Besides the natural rights, which the Christian ought to respect in all men, the Christian brother has Christian liberty and Christian privileges, with which other believers have no right to interfere. Every Christian is a freeman in Christ, with liberty and rights that are inalienable. This is evident to all who recognize the

doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. In opposition to the Romish tyranny over the conscience, the Reformers placed in bold relief the doctrine of the universal priesthood of Christians; but since the Reformation this doctrine has frequently been ignored in theory in the Protestant Church, and has often been violated in practice. But if society is to be truly evangelical and free, and if social intercourse is to be spiritually profitable in the highest degree, then this doctrine must be both professed and practised.

Under the Old Testament dispensation the priests constituted a distinct order. They formed a kind of mediatorial class, standing between God and the people. They offered the sacrifices for the people, and also made intercession for them. The imperfect state of things, and the preparatory nature of that dispensation, made a distinct order of priests necessary. But Christ came as the great High Priest, who made the all-sufficient sacrifice for his people, and who, at the right hand of the Father, makes intercession for them. Christ's work, and his intimate relation to his people, make a special order of priests unnecessary under the Christian dispensation. Every believer, however humble his position, has immediate access to Christ, and through him to the Father. Indeed, to put any one between him and his Saviour is to rob him of his greatest privilege, and to degrade him from the position given him by Christ. Romanism retains the priestly order, because its system is modelled so largely after the Old Testament, and does not rise into the full glory of evangelical truth. The evangelical Church recognizes but one High Priest, Jesus Christ; it denies the need and the propriety of a special priest-

hood; and it teaches that all Christians are kings and priests unto God. This view is Scriptural. We read (Rev. 1 : 6) that Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." In 1 Pet. 2 : 5–7, Christians are called a "holy priesthood," "a royal priesthood." Thus, the very apostle whom Romanists profess to follow accords to all Christian sa position which is in direct conflict with the Papal system.

The doctrine of the universal priesthood of Christians makes believers directly responsible to God, not to one another. However great the differences between believers, no one has a right to lord it over God's heritage. The Christian's relation to God makes him free. This liberty of the Christian is a boon of inestimable value; and its recognition in others is as essential to Christian society, as its recognition in self is to the true dignity of the Christian character. Paul exhorts the Galatians to be firm in maintaining their Christian liberty. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5 : 1). And in the 13th verse he says: "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."

The Christian may, indeed, himself abuse his liberty. He abuses it when he regards that liberty as freeing him from the restraints of God's Word, or from the performance of his duty toward others. His liberty is not a liberty unto sin, but unto holiness. And the apostle who exhorts Christians to stand fast in their liberty, in the same chapter warns them as follows: "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." And Peter wants the believers to be "free," but he adds, "not

as using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." If the believer abuses his freedom, and advances claims to which he has no right, then, of course, the brother need not respect those claims; indeed, it would be wrong to do so.

Though the universal priesthood of Christians gives to each believer rights and privileges which the entire brotherhood ought to respect, it does not make all the disciples of Christ alike. There are differences in degrees of piety and of knowledge, and there are different offices, all of which the Scriptures recognize. The New Testament recognizes the fact that some are weak, while others are strong; that some are of low degree, and others of high degree; that some receive one talent, others two, others five; that there are diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations. And as it recognizes these differences as legitimate, so Christianity also teaches its adherents to render to all their dues—"honour to whom honour is due." It teaches a system of correct relations and of just government, and is hostile to anarchy. Christianity, therefore, respects distinctions in society, and does not put all believers on a dead level. But whatever the differences in Christian society, the relation between two believers cannot be that of a spiritual master and a spiritual slave. "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Yet the very next verse recognizes a real difference between the disciples of Christ. "But he that is greatest among

you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23 : 8–11). The apostles even were not lords over the churches. Paul guards against such an inference when he explains his relation to the Corinthians, and says : "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand" (2 Cor. 1 : 24). Peter warns those who were elders like himself, and who might be tempted to exercise undue authority over their flocks, not to act "as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5 : 3.) But if apostles and elders and teachers have no right to dominion over others, how much less have those who are inferior to them a right to domineer over their brethren! No one has authority to set up his opinion as a law for others. Nor has any one a monopoly of the interpretation of God's Word. It is, in fact, the duty of every believer to go directly to that fountain of spiritual wisdom and to draw for himself from its living waters.

Whoever, in his intercourse with believers, disregards their rights and liberties departs from the principles of the Gospel. There are, indeed, certain doctrines and practices which are essential to Christianity, and which are the conditions of recognition in the Christian brotherhood. Before giving another the hand of Christian fellowship, we must demand that he believe in Christ, that he profess his faith in him, and that he live worthy of that profession. A latitudinarianism that ignores these conditions is as unscriptural as an exclusiveness that withholds fellowship from true disciples of Christ. There are clearly defined doctrines and practices which exclude a man from Christian discipleship. But it is equally true that there are many

views on religion which are neither characteristic of the Christian nor of the worldly; which, accordingly, neither make a man a Christian nor do they exclude him from Christ. Some matters in religion must be classed among things which are in themselves matters of indifference, being neither moral nor immoral. Disputes about such matters arose already in the days of the apostles. (See Rom. 14.) "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." It is in itself a matter of indifference whether the Christian eats meat offered to idols, knowing that the fact of its being thus offered does not in the least affect the meat. (1 Cor. 10:25.) No law is laid down in the Gospel respecting the food to be eaten, the whole matter being left to the liberty of the Christian. (1 Cor. 10:27.) The apostle lays down the same law respecting holidays (Rom. 14:5, 6). "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." And since the days of the apostles questions have frequently arisen respecting things indifferent in themselves, and many efforts have been made to make laws where the Gospel grants liberty. There are amusements which in themselves are harmless and may be the means of profitable recreation,

The Christian has the right to engage in such amusements; and for doing so, no brother is authorized to censure him. There are many things respecting himself, his family, his business affairs, his social relations, his worship, which are his personal concerns, and in respect to which he ought to assert and maintain his liberty, so long as he does not interfere with the liberty and welfare of others. Many of these personal concerns are, in fact, of such a character that no one else can fully understand them, of which others, therefore, cannot judge. There are passages of Scripture on which the most candid and the most enlightened may honestly differ; there are many doctrines which all honest and earnest Christians cannot see alike; and on church government, discipline, ceremonies, modes of worship, and on various practices, different views are possible and are allowable. These facts the believer must fully recognize in his fellowship with the brethren. And that liberty of conscience which he claims for himself, and which is as dear as life itself, which, in fact, makes life valuable, he must also cheerfully grant unto others. He may argue with others, and may strive to convince them by all proper means; but he has no divine authority to dogmatize, or to make his opinion a law unto others. "Who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4 : 12). And Paul says, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master [to God] he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14 : 4). On many subjects there may, therefore, be great differences of opinion, without in reality interfering with Christian communion. But in order that these differences may be harmless, Christian charity must prevail.

While in matters that do not affect his Christian character the believer may claim liberty, still he must have regard to the consciences of others even in such matters. And it is an important and exceedingly difficult question, how far the believer ought to respect the views of others in regard to his conduct. Respect for the liberty of another implies respect for his conscience. The Christian may have perfect liberty in regard to doing certain things; but if by doing them he wounds the conscience of a brother, must he not sacrifice his liberty out of respect for the brother's conscience? The apostle's rule in such cases is, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10 : 23 ; 6 : 12). Had he only himself to consider, then in all matters of indifference the believer might give free exercise to his liberty. But he must take into account the consciences, the feelings, the opinions of others; and on account of these, many things that are lawful are not expedient and edify not. He that has a tender regard for the consciences of brethren will carefully avoid all unnecessary offence. If the matters are in themselves spiritually indifferent and of no importance, then the believer can better afford to refrain from them than he can afford to injure his brother by doing them. Genuine charity for a brother, and a Christian regard for his spiritual welfare, should have more weight with the believer than mere inclination. This is Paul's position. He supposes the following case: If believers are invited by unbelievers to a feast, they may go, if so disposed, and they may eat what is set before them, asking no question for conscience' sake.

"But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake, . . . conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other. . . . . Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10 : 27–33). See also 1 Cor. 8 : 7–13, where Paul says, in the last verse, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Also Rom. 14 : 15–21, which passage Paul closes thus : "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." From these passages it is evident that in non-essentials, which involve no principle, the strong Christian ought to exercise the spirit of charity and of sacrifice.

But if the strong Christian yields some of his rights for the sake of a weak brother's conscience, the latter is not to be encouraged in uncharitable judgment and in arrogating unto himself the right to judge others in matters religiously indifferent in themselves. The apostle's argument is, that the strong ought to bear with the weak; they have the strength to make concessions (Rom. 14 : 1). But this is not to be done to the spiritual detriment of the weak, but for their spiritual advancement. If by making concessions to the weak their growth is retarded, then the concessions ought not to be made. The weak brother, in fact, has no more right to judge the strong one in non-essential matters, than the strong brother has a right

to offend the conscience of a weak one. (Rom. 14 : 10.) Christians must neither judge one another in such matters, nor dare they ignore one another. Neither judge nor offend ; that is the general rule. On the part of both the strong and the weak there are, therefore, duties, and they are equally imperative. The strong and independent brother is not to be defiant : and the brother with a tender conscience is not to make his conscience the accuser of another brother. But he that is the strongest, the most perfect, and the most loving, is the one who will yield most readily for the good of others. Yet it is not always best to yield so as to avoid giving offence. There may be occasions when it is to the best interest of the weak brother that the strong one do the very things that offend him. The vindication of Christian liberty and the elevation of the weak brother may require this. The very censure of the weak, and the fault-finding spirit, may need a rebuke. The Christian character is not affected by the fact that one eats or does not eat meat on Friday ; but if it be pronounced sinful to eat meat on that day, it may be a duty to eat meat, in order to condemn such an opinion. In an age when a narrow legalism threatens to usurp the throne of a free Gospel, it is essential to assert boldly, and if need be defiantly, the evangelical liberty of the believer. If to refrain from doing a thing encourages uncharitable judgment, then it is wrong to refrain ; if to do a deed retards a true but weak Christian in his spiritual growth, then the doing of the deed is not charitable.

It must be evident to all who reflect on the matter, that this subject is beset with difficulties, and that no

specific rules can be given which are applicable to all cases. Great discrimination and great caution are necessary. The Christian who would regard the liberty and the conscience of a brother, needs the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove. He must have quickness of perception, delicacy of feeling, and great tact in giving expression to that feeling. The Gospel promotes that real refinement which should characterize the believer in all his relations to other believers and to men of the world. Instead of giving mere outward polish, which is so often taken as the characteristic of a gentleman or lady, the Gospel polishes the inner man and adorns the soul with spiritual graces, making it truly a beautiful soul. Christians are those whose adorning is that of "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3 : 3). The Christian is the true gentleman or lady, both as far as inner qualities and their outward manifestations are concerned.

The effort of the believer to show proper regard for the liberty and the consciences of others, must not, however, weaken himself, nor make him hesitating and undecided in his conduct. Painful anxiety on this subject is unbecoming ; and where it is indulged, it will seriously affect the Christian character. The believer should remember that he cannot always determine or foresee the results of his conduct. When his conscience is properly enlightened by Scripture, then the chief aim is to be, to act conscientiously. In matters involving Christian principle, the believer dare not allow himself to be controlled by the feelings

of others; and even when such principle is not directly involved, the Christian is not called to be a slave to the caprices or the weak consciences of others.

From what has been said, it is clear that in his fellowship with brethren the Christian must expect to make sacrifices. All association worthy of the name is based on sacrifice. Selfishness is the deadly foe of society. He that is not willing to make sacrifices must either abandon society, or else must arrogate unto himself a tyrant's position, who aims to make his opinion the law of society. In Christian society there must be an effort on the part of the members to adapt themselves to one another, and to make for one another the sacrifices inspired by Christian love.

He that wants to respect the liberty of the Christian brother must learn to appreciate views that differ from his own. He should expect contradiction. To have a mind and heart only for opinions that agree with their own, is characteristic of bigots and of the most conceited and the most prejudiced. He that would do justice to others must put himself in their place, and must fully weigh their reasons for differing from him. For this a vivid imagination and a sympathetic nature are essential.

Many of the disturbances which occur in society do not spring from ill-will or evil intention, but arise from the fact that men do not appreciate one another's views, and therefore are not able to do them justice. Mere misunderstanding is, probably, the most fruitful source of social difficulties. Such misunderstanding can be avoided only by a careful examination and just appeciation of the opinions of others. And

many social infelicities could be removed by a full and candid discussion of their sources.

Respect for the liberty and conscience of the brother is so essential, that without it real Christian fellowship is impossible. He that would be a leader in society, doing it the most good and deriving most benefit from it, must cherish this respect, and must enlarge his views and sympathies by studying opinions that differ from his. Every Christian should, therefore, accord to every other Christian the same liberty, rights, and privileges which he claims for himself. The higher the claims of the Christian, therefore, the more is he also bound to grant unto others.

b. The duty of forbearance and forgiveness.

This duty is intimately connected with respect for the Christian liberty of the brother, which respect, as we have already seen, requires the spirit of charity and of sacrifice. He that makes an earnest effort to do justice to others will find that he himself often comes short, and that he needs the forbearance and the forgiveness of his fellow-men; and he will also find much in others that is hard to bear, and much that needs forgiveness. One need but study himself, his relations to others, and Christian society at large, to be made conscious of the frequent demands for the exercise of these virtues.

The apostle Paul beseeches the Ephesian Christians to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another." And to the Colossians, in the second chapter, he writes: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meek-

ness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so do ye. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

It seems almost useless to urge the performance of the duty of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, while speaking of love in its application to other Christians, since this love already implies these virtues. And every principle of the Gospel demands their exercise; and God, in his forbearance and forgiveness to us, says, "Go and do thou likewise." The frequent exhortations of the apostles to forbear and forgive show how highly they esteemed these virtues, and how essential to Christian society they regarded them. And yet, clear and important as they are, these virtues are so greatly neglected, and are so difficult, that there is scarcely anything else in our relation to others that needs to be more insisted on. Forbearance and forgiveness should be so cultivated as to be the spontaneous expression of Christian love.

This duty does not, however, require the Christian to be blind to the faults of others, or to apologize for them. Such a course would only serve to blunt the conscience and to weaken morality. When Jesus says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," he surely does not mean that Christians are to be indifferent to the conduct of brethren, and that holy indignation at the violation of God's law is to be repressed. Neither in feeling nor in conduct does the Gospel tolerate antinomianism. The Christian must abhor evil; but how can he do this, unless he sees it and condemns it? The Gospel does not turn black into white, and pro-

nounce evil good ; nor does it, even in the slightest degree, wink at iniquity ; but it calls things by their right names. Jesus wants his followers to know the truth concerning men, and to judge accordingly. Under certain circumstances they must even pronounce a professed believer a heathen and a publican (Matt. 18 : 15–17). But the Christian is to judge charitably. Such a judgment respecting a Christian's failings will be true judgment. For, who that knows human weaknesses and temptations ; who that understands his own heart, and reads aright the record of his own failings, can judge a brother otherwise than charitably ? Truth in this case is charity. Often a distinction must be made between the deed and the person ; for the deed may have been done under peculiar excitement or passion, and may not be a true expression of the real character of the doer. And no deed that is exceptional, whether good or bad, should be made the test of a man's character.

Neither does the spirit of forbearance and forgiveness make the reproof of a brother improper. Under certain circumstances it becomes a duty to reprove the erring brother. Timothy, though still a young man is exhorted to reprove and rebuke (2 Tim. 4 : 2). The reproof which the believer must administer lies not without the sphere of Christian love, but is required by that love, and is to be an expression of that love. The cause of Christ and the spiritual welfare of the brother may demand reproof. To withhold it under such circumstances is sinful. The reproof is to be fearless, but not in anger. It is to be administered in love, as an affectionate father punishes an erring child. Caution, great caution is necessary

in administering reproof. He that does it must himself be pure. And well may the believer ask himself, What right have I, with my imperfections and failings, to reprove my brother?

There may be too much forbearance. Charity is never to cease; but there may be deeds by the brother in Christ which even charity cannot bear. Forbearance is not to be a sign of weakness, nor is it to encourage a brother in evil. Pity for the weak and erring must not obstruct the way for duty. Christianity has room for sternness and severity, as well as for mildness. Believers may be sentimentally gentle. Ministers, in their efforts to exhibit the gentleness of the Gospel, may become weak. They are to win men; but this is to be done by strong love, not by sentimentalism. On the ministerial brow a frown may be as graceful as a smile on the lips. The suavity which degenerates to weakness can only injure the cause of Christ. The excessive desire to please and to win men may make the minister effeminate. Christian gentleness and meekness must not eradicate Christian manliness and independence, but must be co-ordinated with them. The Christian is to be the gentlest of men; but he is, at the same time, to be the strongest and the most heroic. He must be able to forbear and forgive; but he must also be able to censure and to spurn. John, the apostle of love, is also a son of thunder.

c. Help the brother in his spiritual growth.

The Christian may need the help of his brethren in other than purely spiritual matters; and when such help is needed, he has a rightful claim on them. Christian love is as comprehensive as human needs;

and the Christian's duty to help the needy is limited only by his ability. Christ's command is: "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John's commentary on this command is: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3 : 16–18). In general benevolence, in helping the poor, and in relieving suffering, the believer should be a model unto men of the world. But instead of this, many who profess to be evangelical Christians might learn from the Catholic Church, from various benevolent organizations not Christian, from Jews, and from men of the world. Even the believer does not always receive the sympathy and aid from his brethren, in his temporal needs, which he has a right to expect; and yet he has not merely the claim of a common humanity on them, but also that of the spiritual brotherhood. This duty of the believer to help in temporal need is not confined to the need of the Christian brother, though the brother has special claims on him.

The duty to promote the Christian growth of the brother is, however, peculiar, a duty which the Christian owes to no one but a brother, since there can be no such growth in any others than Christians. While, therefore, the believer owes his brother all the duties which a man owes to his fellow-man, he also owes him the peculiar duty of promoting his growth in grace.

Very generally, the power of the believer over the brethren is underestimated. It is difficult for him to

form a correct estimate of his influence, and of the liability of others to be affected. Every believer can study the influence of Christian precept and example in the effect which they have exerted on himself. How different his character would have been if he had developed it in solitude! Had the influence of others been different, then he would have been different also. Not only in childhood and in youth are the mind and heart plastic, and liable to be moulded by surrounding influences and circumstances, but all through life this is the case. The lives of those about him, and their opinions, are apt to exert a greater influence on a man than the pulpit and the press. His surroundings, in fact, are apt to be more potent in shaping his character than all other influences combined. Much of this influence of man on man is unconscious, both on the part of him that exerts it, and on the part of him on whom it is exerted. Men are often led by others, or at least greatly influenced by them, when they imagine that they are independent of them. There is, of course, great difference in the social power of different individuals, both in respect to quality and quantity. There is also great difference in the susceptibility of persons to influence. But both the Christian's power over others and his susceptibility to influence may be cultivated. He who would receive most benefit from social intercourse with other Christians must cultivate his receptivity; though he must never so far forget himself as to become the clay, while others are the potters. And he who would affect the brethren the most powerfully must understand those he would influence, and

must cultivate his power over them; though he should never aim to make them his tools.

The influence of the believer may be evil as well as good. Instead of promoting, he may retard the spiritual growth of other Christians. The believer must therefore guard himself in society, lest by word or deed he affect others injuriously. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." He, therefore, that would help other believers, must first of all look to himself. "Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" He that wants to enrich others must have something worthy of being imparted, a treasury from which he brings things old and new.

If, now, the Christian is thoroughly furnished for the good work of promoting the growth of his brethren in social life, what is the work required, and how can it be done? We have already seen that all Christian growth is twofold in its character. Some things are to be removed, as error, evil inclinations, sinful passions, and the like. Then, there is grace in the believer's heart, and this is to be developed. Faith, love, and hope, which already reign in him, but are still imperfect, are to be made stronger. The work to be performed on every Christian is, therefore, negative and positive; it is destructive and it is constructive. This was the work which Christ performed on his disciples. Their errors and faults were many; these he aimed to destroy. He also gave them a new life, and developed it by means of his truth and spirit. And all the instructions and exhortations of the apostles, if generalized, will be found to have the same twofold aim. The heart is a field in which there are weeds to be destroyed and good plants to be

cultivated. This process is the condition for all healthy growth and real progress.

In our social intercourse with brethren, we must, therefore, expect to find in them imperfections, just as they find imperfections in us. While judging truthfully and charitably of others, we are, at the same time, in duty bound to use our influence to remove their faults. All believers are apt to make themselves critics and judges' though but few of them are led, through their own criticism and judgment, to cast the beams out of their own eyes, so that they may see clearly to cast the mote out of the brother's eye. The faults of a brother should lead to self-examination, as well as to an examination of the brother. He who does not appreciate his own failings can have but little sympathy for others in their failings, and cannot work effectively for the removal of those failings. Even the apostles, needed the purifying influence of one another, as well as of the Spirit of God. Paul felt that Peter was to blame, and he "withstood him to the face" (Gal. 2 : 11–14). And the Christian may find it necessary by word and deed to rekuke brethren, in order to pormote their spiritual growth. Paul says: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thess. 5 : 14). The disorderly are to be rebuked (2 Thess. 3 : 11–15). Paul is by no means sparing in his rebukes. In this respect he imitates Jesus, who on one occasion found it necessary to administer a severe rebuke to Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

In order that the reproof may be the means of spiritual improvement, it must be administered in a fraternal spirit, and must come from one who is not himself guilty of the fault rebuked. He that condemns another, and does the same thing, condemns himself (Rom. 2 : 1). For a miser to reprove a miser, or one hypocrite another, is simply ridiculous. In many cases it is only necessary to convince the believer of his fault to lead him to correct it. Proper instruction on the requirements of the Gospel, and careful self-examination, are the best means of leading those who are sincerely desirous of growth to abandon their faults. Frequently the most effective rebuke is given by conduct the very reverse of that which is to be rebuked. The severest rebuke to loveless treatment is given by that warm love which heaps coals of fire on the head. Tenderness and kindness are most effective in making harshness and unkindness ashamed. Liberality is the severest rebuke to stinginess, and deep spirituality to worldliness. And the good deed is not only the most effective rebuke, but it is also an example which leads to imitation. While it is thus destructive of evil in others, it is also promotive of good.

Besides eradicating evil, there are also Christian graces in the brother which should be promoted in social intercourse. Faith is to be strengthened, love is to be deepened and broadened, hope is to be made firmer and brighter, peace and joy are to be developed, and the manifestation of these graces is to be promoted. There is a contagious influence in the Christian virtues. The spirit of one believer is apt to communicate itself unto others. Hence the power of the

Christian graces in society, and hence, too, the many exhortations of Scripture to use the Christian virtues for the strengthening of others. Christians are to edify one another by means of these graces. There are many who need the encouragement of their brethren. The desponding need cheering, the despairing need the inspiration of hope, the doubting need the nerving influence of a heroic faith, and the fallen need the helping hand to lift them up. Much that the pulpit cannot give can be imparted by the personal contact of Christian with Christian, by the communion of one redeemed soul with another. It is in such communion that spirit can enter into the deepest sympathy with spirit, can find out its needs, and can offer the needed supply to the best advantage.

The need of Christian fellowship is keenly felt by many. The strongest, as well as the weakest, may feel it. Paul desired the fellowship of the Christians at Rome, that he might impart some spiritual gift unto them, and that he also might be comforted by them. In this fellowship great good may be done by communicating the Christian experience of the heart, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows. Especially can the advanced believer help those who are less advanced, by giving them the benefit of his experience. Whatever is calculated to develop the Christian character and personality of the believer is of special value in Christian social intercourse.

d. Duty to the reputation of a brother.

The Christian owes a duty to the reputation of others, whether believers or not. But his intimate relation to other believers makes his duty with respect to their reputation specially strong. The cause of a

single believer is that of the whole Church. In the honour of a brother, the Church and the cause are honoured; and his disgrace attaches also to the cause he represents. It is only when Christians ignore their relations to one another that they can at all treat with indifference the reputation of a brother. Our religious journals, Christian society, and society in general, need very much to learn Luther's remarks on the Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." He says: "We should so fear and love God, as not to belie, betray, slander, or raise injurious reports against our neighbour; but apologize for him, speak well of him, and put the most charitable construction on all his actions."

The love of slander is one of the characteristics of the age. Editors seem to be aware of this, and furnish a liberal supply for the gratification of their readers. Nor is this catering to a depraved taste confined to the secular press. This has been called an age of slander, and with much truth. The very fact that slander has become so common puts the Christian under special obligations in this respect. He ought to be all the more on his guard, lest the contagious spirit affect and corrupt him also. And it is his duty to do all he can to stem the corrupt stream which now pollutes society. He that feels a personal interest in others must be pained by the slander that affects them.

It is a good rule, never to say behind the back of a brother what we would not say to his face. And, generally, that which is said against a brother should be said to him first of all. Never should a report unfavourable to another be repeated from a love of

slander, but only because some good purpose is to be accomplished by the repetition.

But, as already intimated, the believer's duty to the reputation of a brother does not require that he should shield him from justice; nor is he required to speak falsely for the sake of a brother, nor to encourage falsehood in his behalf. Sometimes the cause of Christ and the interest of truth and justice demand the publication of the faults of men. The saddest thing connected with this whole matter is, that so many believers expose themselves to blame. If they were really guiltless, and lived before the world a life of purity, then the charges against them would amount to but little. But because they are so imperfect, therefore the stories told to their detriment are so readily believed, even if they are false. One of the best means for protecting the reputation of brethren is, so to aid them in their growth in grace that their characters will not be liable to aspersion, and that their reputation will take care of itself. The Christian should be so pure as to be above suspicion.

The consciousness of the organic unity of Christians, and of the fact that what affects one member affects the whole body, would do much to create a deeper interest in the reputation of a brother. In that reputation every believer, in fact, has a personal interest. With the brother he suffers, and the whole cause suffers; and with the brother he rejoices, and the whole cause rejoices.

A man's reputation should be regarded as sacred, and should be tarnished only when he has forfeited all claim to a good character.

"The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless reputation; that away,
Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay."

e. The duty of commendation.

There are those to whom it will seem strange that this is placed among the duties of a Christian to his brother; and some may question, whether it is really a duty. So generally is it neglected, that to commend good in others seems to be regarded as scarcely a requirement of the religion of Christ. Indeed, Christian commendation is almost a lost art. It might be interesting and profitable to inquire into the causes of this general neglect. It is certain that the importance of the duty is not appreciated, and that the Scriptural view on the subject is not understood. Jealousy and envy, no doubt, have much to do with this neglect. Probably a false view of Christian humility—a view which thinks that the believer ought rather to depreciate than appreciate himself—prevents some from commending in others what is really worthy of commendation. A want of appreciation of what is good in others may sometimes be the cause of the neglect. Then, Christians do not trust one another enough. If commended, they are apt to suspect flattery; and they fear that they will be suspected of flattery if they commend. True, often there is but little to commend, but ought not that little to be commended? The above are, no doubt, the main reasons why hearty Christian commendation is so rare.

The neglect of this duty is all the more surprising when we examine the plain teachings of Scripture on the subject. To him who uses his talents aright the Lord says: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And shall Christians be dumb, instead of echoing the Lord's "Well done"? To one whose attention has never been directed to this matter, the many passages of Scripture which teach and illustrate this duty must be surprising. A few passages must suffice here—passages which, by illustrating the duty, give an example of it and teach it. Paul says: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. 15 : 14). In 2 Thess. 1 : 3, he says: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."*

To speak in a commendable manner of that which is worthy of it shows a proper appreciation. Many believers keenly feel the lack of this appreciation. Some, who feel that they are alone in their arduous struggles to resist temptation and to grow in faith, are discouraged, because there seems to be so little sympathy for them in their struggles; whereas they might be greatly encouraged and aided if their earnest efforts and their attainments were properly appreciated and commended. All who have been the recipients of judicious approval know its beneficial effects by experience. To speak approvingly of virtue is to strengthen and encourage it. Surely, if reproof is needed to check evil, commendation is just as much needed to encourage the Christian graces.

In order that proper commendation may be given,

* See also Rom. 1 : 8; 16th Chapter; 1 Cor. 11 : 2; 2 Cor. 8 : 7; 9 : 2; Eph. 1 : 15, and foll.; Col. 1 : 4, and foll.; 2 : 5; 1 Thess. 1 : 2; Phil, 5th Chapter.

it is necessary to cultivate the appreciation of the good. This is essential, also, for counteracting the tendency to fault-finding. If a brother must be criticized, let the criticism bring out his good as well as his evil points. The good that is in a brother should be spoken of to others and brought to the light, so that others may be induced to imitate it. The light that beams from a Christian glorifies the Father in heaven, and promotes the cause of Christ.

Christian commendation is a buried talent which should be unearthed and put to usury. It should be restored to the place in Christian society which the Bible gives it. It is as essential as reproof, and should be used honestly and judiciously. The same law which demands the reproof of vice to check it, also demands the commendation of virtue to promote its growth.

f. Social duties to the brethren under peculiar circumstances.

The Christian owes the duties thus far considered to every brother, whatever the circumstances of that brother may be. Believers may, however, be placed in peculiar positions, with peculiar needs, in which cases other believers owe them peculiar duties. There is, indeed, something peculiar in every Christian and in his relations; and the believer, in his communion with his brother, is to adapt himself, as much as possible, to the person and the circumstances. But besides these individual peculiarities, there are occasions when believers are placed in circumstances which require special consideration and adaptation on the part of the brethren.

(1.) *The young convert.*

As the Christian life is all new to the young convert, he needs the counsel, the sympathy, and the guidance of the older members. When the first transports of joy at conversion are over, and temptations begin to crowd upon him, a reaction may take place, and he may become discouraged and even disheartened. Then it is that he needs the counsel and encouragement of his brethren, the strong hand and the cheering, sympathetic word, to help him over his difficulties. If left alone, he will soon painfully feel his weakness, and the need of the faith and the prayers and counsel of other Christians. There are crises in the experience of all young believers, when the help of the older brethren is specially important. If this is then withheld, the loss to the Church, as well as to the young believers, may be very serious. Too often young converts are left to take care of themselves, without proper assistance from others, after they have once entered the Church. Their many failings, their slow progress, and the departure of so many from their first love, are in large part owing to the treatment received from the Church itself. In place of the evil associates which young members have left, they should be surrounded by pious companions whose aim it is to make their Christian course far more joyous than their worldly life was. Every Church should feel a special responsibility resting on it, by proper social intercourse to train those who have recently made a profession of Christ. In some cases it would be well to make it the duty of an older believer to have special charge of a young convert.

(2.) *The falling brother.*

This is one who has grown cold in Christ's service,

who neglects his duties, and, perhaps, commits grievous sins. The tendency is too much to shun such and to blame them severely, without making any efforts to restore them. Instead of saying to them virtually, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou," believers should rally around them and earnestly and affectionately try to restore them to their duty. If they are neglected, they receive the impression that Christian society does not care for them, and this conviction is apt to accelerate their downward course. Many have not the courage to associate with a brother in disrepute. But the very fact that such a brother is likely to be neglected, and is so greatly in need of help, makes the duty to assist him all the more imperative.

(3.) *The brother in adversity.*

The adverse circumstances to which believers are subjected are many. To those who are in such circumstances the brethren owe special duties. "Ye have the poor always with you," said Jesus. They are frequently timid and shrinking, because of their poverty, and hence are not appreciated according to their real worth. Often great delicacy is required in treating them, on account of their extreme sensitiveness. They should be made to feel that in God's sight wealth is no commendation, nor poverty a disgrace. Though they may not be able to do as much pecuniarily for the Church as others, yet in all spiritual matters they should be placed on an equal footing with the rest. There must be neither an aristocratic, nor a privileged, nor a favoured class in the Church, unless the poor constitute the favoured class.

Pecuniary embarrassments are generally peculiarly trying to those who have been in good circumstances.

It is easy to say, that such ought to put their trust in the Lord, and not to let earthly affairs fill them with anxious cares; but a sudden change from affluence to poverty may severely try the faith of the sincerest follower of Christ. In such circumstances the brother needs the sympathy and help of his brethren; and they should come to his aid more liberally and cheerfully than men of the world ever do. It is almost incredible, and yet it is true, that professors of Christ's name can be found who are actually ashamed of those who have suddenly become poor. Some will even shun them, while they covet the companionship of those who have acquired their wealth by dishonourable means. Where the man is appreciated for his own sake, such conduct is, of course, impossible. The true believer will cling the more closely to the brother in such trying circumstances, simply because he needs his help the more.

When affliction enters the family in the form of sickness and death, then the tender, loving sympathy of the Christian brother is specially grateful. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." Those who have been in similar affliction are best able to sympathize with the afflicted brother and to cheer him. But all the brethren should make his case their own. Much may be done to relieve suffering, to encourage faith, and to cheer the heart. And in sickness, especially on the death-bed, no Christian should be without the aid of his brethren. Whatever balm may be needed, they should furnish it, as far as it is in their power. In this respect the primitive Church is a model for all ages. The Church laid to heart the afflictions of a brother, and helped him to bear them. She gathered around her martyrs, and cheered them on their way to

martyrdom, as is strikingly illustrated in the case of Polycarp. Then, when one member of the body suffered, all the members suffered with it.

The same law of duty applies to all kinds of adversity. Christian love is never better applied than when it seeks and helps the most needy and the most neglected brethren. That is work the most like Christ's and the surest of heaven's approval. Priests and Levites can be spared from the Church of Christ, but good Samaritans are in great demand. Social affinities and other causes will, naturally, draw the believer more closely to some brethren than to others. But however proper this may be, the spirit of Christ should, at the same time, draw him to the tried, the suffering, and the afflicted brother, simply because he needs his help.

We can sum up the whole matter by saying, that the ideal unity of Christian society gives the law for the love and conduct of brother to brother. All the social conduct in Christian society is to spring from the living consciousness of this unity, and its aim should be to make the real Christian society correspond with the ideal. On this whole subject the realization of the social truths in John's First Epistle, and in 1 Cor. 12, 13, is of special importance. All have the right spirit who can heartily say:

"Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers:
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear."

FOURTH DIVISION.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN ITS APPLICATION TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

MUCH that has already been said is applicable to believers in their association with non-believers. This need not be repeated here. In this chapter it is the aim to notice those things which make the duties of Christians to non-believers peculiar.

As the Christian must sustain other than purely spiritual relations, so he must also expect to enter into association with worldly men for other than purely spiritual aims. The moral law for all such associations is, never to enter into relations which are sinful; never to countenance evil; never to deny, explicity or implicity, the Christian character; and never, in worldly affairs, to ignore the religious relations and duties. But important as these relations may be, it is the religious influence of the believer which chiefly concerns us here. The better to understand that, it will be convenient to divide the chapter under different heads.

1. *The believer's religious aim for associating with non-believers.*

In this, as well as in every other respect, Christ's course is the model for believers. The Pharisees judged him according to the rule that a man is known by the company he keeps. They regarded all association with sinners as an evidence of similarity of character and congeniality of taste. The Pharisees, being carnal, could not appreciate the spiritual motives of Jesus. Though he was the farthest removed from sinners in character and disposition, Jesus nevertheless frequently entered into conversation with them, and showed deep sympathy for them. In associating with them he accomplished his mission to seek and to save that which was lost. It was his aim to free them from the dominion of sin, and to make them children of God and heirs of glory.

Jesus wanted his disciples to be like himself in spirit, and their work like his own. "Follow me," so often spoken by him, meant more than merely to walk after him. It evidently meant to make him the model, and to strive in all things to be and to do like him. And all that he taught his disciples, by word and miracle and example, was calculated to fit them to do the same kind of work that he performed. His call to them was, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." That this applies specially to the first disciples and to ministers, is true; but it also applies to all believers. And so far as the believer associates with non-believers for a religious purpose, his aim should be the same as that of Christ—to win them from sin and bring them unto God.

Christ's example and command are sufficient to fix this as the aim. Other considerations, however, serve to confirm this. God's grand aim with reference to

man is his redemption from sin and his full restoration to the image of God; and in this all who have the mind of God must be in harmony with him. The believer walks with God and is his co-worker. But the very nature of the believer's love establishes the same aim. He loves the soul of the non-believer, which is also the object of the love of Christ and of the Father. This soul he loves, not merely for what it is, but also for its capacities and possibilities. Though steeped in sin, it may become pure and a radiant reflection of the divine image. Genuine love for the soul will seek for it that which is highest; this is its redemption and its immortal glory.

When the believer appreciates God's saving love, Christ's work, and the soul's inestimable value, it is no wonder that he is seized with an intense longing and deep yearning for lost souls, such as interpret the seeking and dying love of Christ. The only wonder is, that those who are Christians can be so indifferent to the condition and fate of those termed "lost" by the Gospel. The indifference, and even apathy of some professors of religion can only be explained by their unbelief, or else by their utter failure to appreciate the value of man, the destructiveness of sin, and the power of redemption.

2. *The nature of the spiritual work in behalf of non-believers.*

This work differs materially from that performed by the believer in behalf of his brethren in Christ. The latter, as we have seen, is partly destructive, partly constructive. The non-believer also has faults, which are to be removed; and he may also have much that is worthy of being developed, excellences

of mind and noble qualities of heart, which should be cultivated. But whatever admirable qualities he may have, he is not spiritual, and he has no Christian graces to be developed. And the principal work to be performed on and in him is creative. The aim of Christian effort in behalf of the unconverted should be to make them spiritual. The Bible represents the work as regeneration, a new creation, a transformation by the renewing of the mind, a new birth, by means of which old things pass away and all things become new. The worldly are to be spiritualized, so that they may have spiritual emotions and aims and works. Like a leaven, the truth and the spirit are to work in the heart until it is changed into their likeness.

While, therefore, believers are like the cultivated field in which there are weeds to be destroyed, but also, grain to be cultivated for eternal garners, the unconverted represent the fallow ground, which needs to be broken up, and on which the seed is yet to be sown from which harvests acceptable to God may spring. Or, to change the figure, believers already follow Christ, and Christian influence on them is to bring them nearer him ; the unconverted, on the other hand, do not follow Christ, but are yet to be brought unto him and are to be made his disciples.

3. *The means to be used.*

German theologians make "Halieutics" a part of practical theology. Its aim is to teach theological students to become "fishers of men." The work of bringing men to Christ is, surely, important enough to make the means to be used worthy of special study. And halieutics, which teaches what these means are, deserves the study of every earnest Christian worker.

But all rules on this subject are valuable only if the right spirit is back of them. In order that Christianity may accomplish its regenerating mission, it must be recognized and treated as an inner spiritual power, which has its seat in the heart, and all whose efforts have heart in them. All tendencies to make its operations mechanical and external can only degrade and injure religion. Faith in this spiritual power is essential, in order that in all Christian work this power may be made the essence. But the Christian spirit is not ghostly in its operations; it gives itself a body, takes some form in which it clothes itself and through which it works. Forms, as the bearers of Christian spirit, are not to be put among indifferent things, since the spirit depends on them for its influence in the world; but they are valuable only so far as they convey spirit. The spirit is the essence in Christian words, deeds, and institutions. Those who think they can promote the Lord's work by substituting noise and show and hollow externalism, for heart and spirit and truth, simply make the mistake of putting the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal in place of the all-powerful love. The life of the spirit may manifest itself in an infinite variety of forms; but they must all be animated by that spirit and must convey it.

Whatever, therefore, the Gospel teaches on the application of love to non-believers must be used as more than merely an external appliance; it must be assimilated by the believer, so that it becomes part of his very being. Unless the rules are a part of the life of the spirit, they will lead to perfunctory work and to a merely legal performance of duty. All such

effort is necessarily cold and formal, artificial and external; and it is also likely to be spasmodic. But when the Gospel on the subject is assimilated by the believer, then there will be heart in his conduct and his work will be truly evangelical. The right heart in this matter is, therefore, above all, important, in order that the right conduct may be free and spontaneous, and that it may be truly Christian and effective. Genuine love for the worldly is necessary, and the social conduct is to be but an application of that love. Where this love reigns in the heart, it is a law unto itself and it will manifest itself in life.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the power of the life of the believer in his influence on the worldly. In all ages, that has been regarded as the most powerful testimony for the truth of the Gospel, and now it may be effective where other things fail. Neander says:* "This divine power of the Gospel revealed itself to the heathen in the life of the Christians, who proclaimed the virtues of him who had called them from darkness to his marvellous light, and who walked as God's children amid the perverted generation, among whom they shone as lights in the world. This proclamation of the Gospel, by means of the life, worked more mightily than the proclamation by means of the Word." He quotes Tertullian as thus addressing the heathen: "Many among you admonish to the bearing of pain and death, namely, men like Cicero, Seneca, and Diogenes; nevertheless, their words do not find as many disciples as do the Chris-

* "Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Geschichte des christlichen Lebens."

tians, who teach by their works." Justin Martyr felt the same influence of the life of Christians, and says: "When I took delight in the doctrine of Plato, and heard the Christians calumniated, but saw them fearless in view of death and of everything that is terrible, then I judged that it was impossible for them to live in vice and debauchery." There is an irresistible argument in the purity, love, sacrifice, and heroism of the truly godly life; and even infidelity feels its power when nothing else can move it. And if any one agency for the conversion of the world is to be placed above all others, that agency is the deep, spiritual life of the true believer. Divine truth in life is the living Gospel of Christ to men.

But while opposing mere legality and externalism, and while advocating genuine heart-effort, it should not be forgotten that there is another element of Pharisaism to be guarded against. It is that spirit which looks on non-believers with a degree of aristocratic pride and spiritual haughtiness, and which says, "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou." Not only is this spirit unworthy of the believer, but it also repels men of the world, and makes it harder to reach them with the Gospel. It is never found in a heart which appreciates its indebtedness to God, and says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." While this haughtiness is repulsive, true Christian humility is attractive and winning.

It is important to take into account the different grades of non-belief, so as to be able to adapt Christian influence to them. Some are very near the kingdom of heaven, while others are very far from it both in spirit and in life. Some are only indifferent, while

others are inimical to religion. Even in infidelity there are many degrees. Jesus, in his intercourse with men, takes their spiritual state into consideration and adapts himself to it. The prophets mentioned in the Epistles were not always those who foretold future events, but often those who had an unusual insight into human character and knew how to adapt the truth to it; and in this sense modern prophets are in demand.

Neander shows* in what various ways persons were led to Christ in the first centuries of the Christian Church. Just as we read in the Gospels that some were attracted to the Saviour by one thing; others by other things, so it was with the working of the Gospel among the heathen. Some were healed in the name of Christ; others felt the burden of sin, and in Christ found the Redeemer and one who led them to a reconciled Father; others were longing, aspiring souls, and they found in Christ the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price; his love, compassion, mercy, and moral beauty and perfection, attracted others; while others who anxiously sought truth among philosophers at last found it in Christ. The same is true now. The conditions and needs of men differ greatly, and so does their susceptibility to spiritual influence. What is effective with one is impotent with another. In order, therefore, that the means may be adapted to the end, they should be suited to the states and needs of persons. Here, of course, only general rules can be given respecting these means. The application must be determined by the persons and the occasions. It is important to find a common basis on which both

* "Denkwürdigkeiten."

the believer and the non-believer stand. When this is found, it may be comparatively easy to work on it for spiritual results. This point of agreement is sometimes a moral subject, or some longing, or the feeling of the need of pardon, or the admission of some religious truth. Many things may become schoolmasters unto Christ; and to use these things at the opportune time is the highest art of the believer in his religious efforts in behalf of non-believers.

Great prudence in the use of spiritual means is essential, otherwise their influence may be the very opposite of that designed. He that would deal with souls must understand souls, must know their needs and what will supply them. The work to be performed is often exceedingly difficult, and requires genuine wisdom and caution. Those who are out of Christ are apt to have prejudices which pervert the truth; these must be removed. They are apt to suspect the sincerity of those who labour in their behalf; and so long as this suspicion remains, the proper influence cannot be exerted on them. All efforts which they regard as having their source in hypocrisy will prove injurious rather than beneficial. He that would exert a spiritualizing influence on the unconverted must make them feel that he is honest, that his motives are pure, and that his efforts proceed from a sincere love for God and for their souls. In order that he may have spiritual power with sinners, it is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the believer's conduct be such as to make the impression that he is in earnest, and that he yearns for the welfare of those in behalf of whom he labours. They must realize that he loves them, and that he has the confidence that his

religion can deliver them from the power of sin and bring them into communion with God.

He, then, that would be a power in drawing men to Christ must first of all attend to his own spiritual state and religious conduct. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to increase more and more, to study to be quiet, to do their own business, and to work with their own hands, in order that they might "walk honestly toward them that were without."* To the Colossians,† he says: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man." In his Second Epistle to Timothy,‡ the apostle indicates what is required of those that would be fishers of men. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his will." The apostle Peter also lays stress on the power of the godly life in the influence of believers on the unconverted. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."§

* 1 Thess. 4 : 10-12. † 4 : 5, 6.
‡ 2 : 24-26. § 1 Pet. 2 : 11, 12.

This shows how important it is that the reputation of the believer be good, since his influence so largely depends on that. And this also shows the believer's duty to the reputation of a Christian brother; for if that is destroyed, his power in winning others for Christ will also be gone.

In order that religion may be truly powerful, it must be manly in the Christian man, and womanly in the Christian woman. Christianity restores true manhood and true womanhood. Instead of interfering with the natural qualities which are admirable, it purifies, strengthens, and uses them. It removes the diseases of the spirit, and invigorates the whole inner man. It gives health and tone to the system. And he who wants to be a power for good to others must have a healthy religion, not the weakly, the sickly, and the sentimental kind. His love must be strong, as well as tender. His dependence on God must make him conscious of being independent of men. There must be nothing of the cringing spirit. With all his yearning to save others, he must maintain the dignity and the nobility of the Christian character. If his religion is insipid, it will disgust rather than win the ungodly. And he must be careful not to obtrude his religious views on the unconverted in such a way as rather to repel than to attract them. Let him remember that the kingdom of God consists not in word, but in power.

The perfect honesty of the Christian in his intercourse with the unconverted does not exclude the wisdom of the serpent. It is, indeed, necessary, in order that the means used may be adapted to the end. The means used must, of course, be Christian. They

must be worthy of the end and adequate for the accomplishment of the end; but the principle must never be adopted that the end justifies the means. Jesus manifests great wisdom in dealing with sinners, always meeting the demands of the occasion, asking the searching question that leads to self-examination, giving the effective answer to questions asked, and fixing the right word to the right place, at the right time. To the cavillers, the hardened sinners, the sanctimonious hypocrite, the sincere inquirer, and to the needy and distressed, Jesus in every case applies the truth that is adapted to their state. The sincere, inquiring soul does not meet with harsh rebuke, nor are the hypocrites received with tender and soothing words. The Saviour's wisdom in dealing with different classes of men is worthy of profound study and of imitation; for he that would catch men must go and do likewise. In the apostle Paul we see similar wisdom, which is manifest in his care to adapt himself to all men, not merely heeding what is lawful, but also that which is expedient. He was made all things to all men, in order that he might by all means save some. The Saviour and the apostle thus both teach the believer genuine wisdom in the use of means for the conversion of men. There are many whose prejudices and antagonism are aroused if they know that efforts are made to spiritualize them. With such persons, indirect means may be more effective than direct ones; or rather, the indirect are the most direct means. When personal appeals to them on the subject would only serve to harden them, or to increase their aversion to religion, the power of a godly life

and the silent but effective influence of Christian love may win them to Christ.

While the great power of the believer is in the truth as exemplified in life and taught in word, its application must be various, just as the truth itself is of great variety. It appeals to all the varied powers of thought as well as feeling. The variety of the Gospel is such that its truths are applicable to all the wants of men, and to all the circumstances in which they can be placed. While the Christian should use Scriptural truth as argument to convince the understanding, he should also use its appeals to conscience, and to hope and fear and all the various emotions, to accomplish his aim. The direct quotation of Scripture is often very effective; but generally the effect of the truth on the believer, and its illustration in his life, are the most powerful appeals of the Gospel.

Whatever means are used by the Christian to influence the non-believer, they must be persuasive. He must use moral power, not coercive force. The sinner has a will, and is a person; he has rights, which must be respected. Men are to be besought to be reconciled to God. If the believer uses the proper means aright, and yet fails to win the sinner from the error of his ways, then he has done his duty, and the blame rests with the sinner. While the Christian is to be zealous for the salvation of souls, he has no right to torment himself, if, after doing his duty to them, men still reject the offers of mercy. He cannot save them; all he can do is to present to them the terms of salvation, and urge them to accept the same.

Peculiar times make peculiar social demand on the believer. He should carefully discern the signs

of the times, and strive to meet the spiritual needs of his day. The prevalence of scepticism is a fact which the Christian must not ignore. Sceptical views are cherished even by the young. They are spread by means of books, pamphlets, papers, lectures, and, in fact, by all the great facilities of the day for spreading opinions. So long as infidelity assumes a scientific or philosophical form, its influence will necessarily be limited. But besides the scholarly scepticism of the day, there is also a popular infidelity which commends itself to the masses. Persistent, organized, and systematic efforts are made to spread it among the people, and the effects are striking, and, in many cases, appalling. In the social circle, on the cars, in hotels and saloons, and, in fact, almost everywhere, infidelity is openly avowed. True, it is often grossly ignorant, but that makes it all the more defiant and blasphemous. There are places in the West where scepticism is not only prevalent in all classes, but is also growing; where religion is regarded as mere superstition and bigotry; and where a sneer at Christianity is regarded as an evidence of superior modern culture. Indeed, as England passed through its period of deism, and Germany through its period of rationalism, so it seems as if America would have to pass through its period of sensuous materialism.

There can be no question that this state of things imposes special duties on believers. Many of the old evidences in favour of Christianity have lost their power. Often the believer may be placed in circumstances which are peculiarly trying, on account of the prevalent unbelief and the still more prevalent practical atheism. He may be subject to sneers and insults

on account of his religion, and even to a species of martyrdom.

While other arguments may have lost their force with unbelievers, that of the Christian graces remains. A light shines through them which is not of earth, and it will be seen by those who have any spiritual appreciation left. The surrounding infidelity should make faith in God, hope in immortality, and Christian love all the more strong; and the contrast between these and the fruits of scepticism should be made strikingly manifest. Sterling integrity; calmness and confidence in adversity; genuine and deep piety in daily life; the spirit of forbearance, gentleness, forgiveness, and love, toward those who are without; and Christian peace, and victory in death, are now specially needed as arguments in favour of the reality and power of the religion of Christ. It may be necessary for believers to band together socially and otherwise for the purpose of promoting faith and checking the ravages of infidelity. In a time of great depression, we read: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another."* In various places there is a demand now for societies to promote the study and promulgation of the evidences of Christianity. The time has come when the eyes of believers should be opened to the progress of infidelity, and when every believer should realize the special responsibility thus placed on him.

There are already many Christian organizations whose aim is directed solely or chiefly to the spiritualization of men, such as missionary, Bible, and tract societies. There is, however, still room for many local

* Mal. 3 : 16.

organizations for spiritual ends. In some places men and women have formed Christian associations, which are exerting a very beneficial influence; and in many other places there is demand for the union of believers for aggressive Christian work. But solid, self-denying work is needed, not merely resolutions and conventions and associations. The peculiar religious needs of a place should be carefully studied, and then the Christian society of that place should inaugurate means to meet those needs. Often a few kindred spiritual souls may effect organizations of great religious power. If the organized churches cannot do the needed work, then let those whose hearts are impelled by the influence of the Spirit undertake it. Especially are organizations needed to promote spiritual social culture and the efficiency of spiritual social power. For the aim is not merely to make the individual believer powerful in his religious relation to the worldly, but also to make the entire spiritual brotherhood most efficient in its regenerative influence. And in many cases the believer's influence is greatly augmented by union with believers in a compact organization.

4. *Limits to the believer's social intercourse with the unconverted for their spiritualization.*

The fact that non-believers do not appreciate the efforts of the Christian, and are ungrateful, is not a sufficient reason for discontinuing those efforts.* Many of the Christian's tasks are thankless, and his noblest sacrifices for others may be unappreciated.

* 2 Cor. 12 : 15. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Nor is the fact that he sees no immediate results of his efforts a reason for their discontinuance. Good may be done which he does not see, and imperceptibly a foundation may be laid on which afterward a Christian character shall be built. Or even if no good has thus far been accomplished, that is no evidence that by future intercourse none will be accomplished.

But if the unconverted themselves withdraw from such intercourse, and insist that no more spiritual efforts in their behalf shall be made, then, in all probability, no other course will be left the Christian than to exert a silent influence, which may, however, be very powerful. If the Christian is convinced that by his efforts he is violating the command of Christ in Matt. 7 : 6, he must cease his direct efforts at least, though he may watch and wait for more opportune seasons. Some may be so utterly abandoned and incorrigible that every Christian effort is repelled by them with insult. In all such cases the Christian may well question the propriety of social intercourse for spiritual ends.

It is often exceedingly difficult to determine whether to enter into friendly relations with certain persons ; and if so, to what extent. On the one hand, the utmost is to be done for the welfare of others, be they ever so bad, so long as there is any hope of reclaiming them. But, on the other hand, the believer must guard himself, lest he himself be contaminated, or others be endangered, or the cause he represents be injured. However desirous he may be of saving the sinner, he must abhor vice, and in his intercourse with men he must show that he does abhor it. In this matter the believer must, therefore, exercise

great caution, lest he do more evil than good by his association with non-believers. He may have to seek some to save them, and to withdraw from fellowship with others to rebuke them and to show his abhorrence of their wickedness.

The believer, by associating with the ungodly, may endanger his own soul, without benefiting them. The young Christian should especially be on his guard, as he is likely to be in the greatest danger. The teaching of Scripture on this subject is clear and emphatic. The wise man says: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away."* We know all that "evil communications corrupt good manners." Paul warns the Ephesians,† "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." A little farther on he says: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Some sins, like certain diseases, are especially contagious. There is peculiar danger in efforts to serve those who commit them. Such lepers should be approached cautiously, lest the leprosy be communicated to the believer. Christians who themselves are liable to particular temptations should avoid those who would be likely to lead them into those temptations. It is, surely, not wise for the Christian to whom the intoxicating cup is a strong temptation, to mingle freely with the intemperate while engaged in their carousals, even for the purpose of saving them. Others may be safe while doing this, but he is not. He has no right to rush into temptation, unless absolutely neces-

* Prov. 4 : 14, 15. † 5 : 2.

sary; and if he is imprudent, he must not expect the grace of God to make up for his failure to exercise due prudence. Or if there is a special temptation to licentiousness, then the believer must avoid the company of those who would endanger his chastity. There are places which it may not be safe for him to enter alone, and from such he should flee, as Lot did from Sodom.

But the believer, in associating with the ungodly, may endanger others as well as himself. He must not bring the wicked into such relations to the pure as to endanger their purity. To save the fallen is a work which Christ delights in. And the deeper their degradation, the nobler the efforts to redeem them. But to bring such into the family where there are children and young persons with whom they must associate is certainly very dangerous. Here zeal must be guided by wisdom, otherwise great evil may result. Even if the believer is perfectly safe himself in associating with certain classes of the ungodly, he has no guarantee that others are equally safe. Tender solicitude for the weak, the inexperienced, and the unsuspecting is specially important.

While the believer exercises due caution lest he be made a partaker of the sins of the ungodly, he must also guard his reputation in associating with them. It should be evident that he does not associate with them, as far as their character is concerned, on the principle that like seeks like, but for their good. Some associations may be specially liable to endanger his reputation and to weaken his influence. While he is not to be morbidly sensitive on the subject, and is not to be controlled by the opinion of others, he

cannot afford to ignore it; and he has no right wilfully or through carelessness to destroy his influence over others.

5. *Duties to special classes of the unconverted.*

Some of the unconverted are surrounded by Christian influences. It may be that members of their own families are pious, or that intimate friends exert a spiritual influence on them; or it may be that they themselves attend divine service. But there are others who are very much neglected spiritually, so much so, in fact, that the direct efforts made to Christianize them are scarcely greater than they would be if they lived in a heathen land. To these neglected classes the believer owes special duties. Jesus himself sets the believer the example of seeking the neglected and the outcast. They are the very ones who most of all need spiritual influences; and often such influences are very effective. Those who are constantly subject to spiritual influences surely have not the same claim on the Christian as those who are not subject to them. And often, when those who were first and repeatedly invited refuse to come to the feast of the Lord, those from the hedges and highways will come gladly. Labour in their behalf is, therefore, frequently very promising. Many of them receive spiritual efforts with real appreciation and gratitude. But even if the efforts do not succeed in bringing them to Christ, still it is the duty of Christians to offer the Gospel to all within their reach, especially to those who are members of the same community. There are country districts which the Gospel rarely penetrates, and in which there are families which are sadly neglected. In our cities spiritual labour in behalf of the neglected is much

needed. This is true especially of the larger cities, though such labour is also needed in the smaller ones. Generally, the neglect of certain classes is far greater than we are apt to imagine. Every large city has a vast missionary field inviting to Christian effort. The churches do not do the work, and as now constituted they cannot do it. The poor do not feel at home in churches where there is an air of aristocracy, or where there is a marked contrast between their dress and that of the members. Nor are the churches so organized and disciplined as to make the entire membership a missionary band. Too many of the members, in fact, still need missionary influences themselves, and are by no means fit to be missionaries. It is therefore evident that the work, if it is to be done at all, must be done largely by individual effort. Sometimes, however, the churches enter energetically upon this work; but too often it is spasmodic, not systematic, and not lasting. If the churches can be aroused to do the work, great good may be done by districting a city and visiting all the families that neglect divine service, speaking to them on religion, giving them religious tracts, papers, and books, and bringing them to some church—not merely inviting and urging them to come—and bringing their children to Sunday-school. Often the poor can best be reached by first relieving their temporal wants. Sympathy for the sick, and the ministrations of love to relieve their sufferings, may open the way for the truth to enter their hearts. By judicious and loving instruction the ignorant may be brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ.

Frequently, when the adults of the neglected classes

cannot be spiritualized, much may be done to save their children from a life of sin and degradation. In fact, the noblest work of the Sunday-school is in behalf of the neglected children. To take care of them is not only the province of mission-schools, but should be made the aim of all Sunday-schools. The children that have pious homes need not so much the Sunday-school instruction as those do who are deprived of spiritual influence at home.

The vicious and the criminal classes also claim special attention. Frequently, all efforts to save them are abandoned, partly because there seems to be but little hope of saving them, and partly because the work is exceedingly difficult and disagreeable, and sometimes dangerous. The work requires much care, and should be done by those who are least liable to be infected. Christian effort in behalf of fallen (they should not be abandoned) women should be conducted by Christian women, seconded by Christian men. Women animated by the spirit of Christ must do a large part of the work of elevating degraded women and children. For them they can do more by visiting the homes of poverty and godlessness than men can possibly do.

The receptivity of the vicious and criminals for spiritual truth is often underestimated. The Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well seems to have been one of the persons that would have been least likely, according to the common view, to receive spiritual impressions; and yet, Jesus teaches her the deepest spiritual truth, and she evidently believes in him. And there may be times when the degraded ones will gladly hea the Gospel and make earnest efforts to comply with

its requirements. Many of them have been led astray by early training and by wicked associates, and have all their life been surrounded by circumstances the most unfavourable to virtue and piety. Deep and warm and active Christian love, manifested toward those altogether unused to it, may move them to penitence and lead them to Christ. They are at least, worthy of earnest efforts; and the duty of Christians in the matter is also clear.

There is a lack of faith respecting the power of the Gospel to save to the uttermost. What is theoretically believed on this point is often practically denied. It is a form of unbelief which is apt to be very pernicious in its effects. In the first ages of Christianity, heathen philosophers thought it absurd that the Gospel should claim to have the power of changing those who were vicious and by nature corrupt, thinking that such could never be made pure. But what philosophy could not do, that the truth of Christ did. It was thought to be very strange that Christianity proposed to do by means of compassion and mercy what could not be effected by punishment. But the Divine method, like the Divine power, differs from that of man. And as Jesus attracted and saved publicans, gross sinners, and outcasts, while on earth, so has he done ever since. The Pharisees, and all who felt satisfied with their own righteousness, have always turned away from him; while those who were crushed by their weight of sin have ever sought and found him. And in the efficacy of the Gospel to save those regarded by men as beyond redemption, it has proved its more than human power to deliver from sin and death. The wisdom of God confounds the wisdom of

men. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."* Indeed, if there were no salvation for the vilest of the vile, there would be no Gospel adapted to all the varied needs of men.

It is evident that efforts in behalf of the low, debased, and outcast must be paralyzed, unless this strong faith in the power of the Gospel reigns in the heart. The work may be slow and discouraging, even without perceptible results, for a long time. But often the most marked results are obtained. Kindliness of heart, deep pity, yearning love, and the spirit of sacrifice are the conditions of success. The mind and heart and method and truth of him who said, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them," are, above all other things, essential. In the parable of the good Samaritan he has deposited much wisdom on this subject.

* 1 Cor. 1 : 27-29.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PASSION FOR HUMANITY.

HUMANITY, as here used, includes every member of the human family. But while it includes all men, it also includes all the interests of man, whether they be physical, intellectual, or moral. Instead of being a mere abstraction, the term humanity is thus very concrete, and presents to us individuals and all that pertains to them.

The interests of man are very varied, which makes it so difficult to comprehend just what is embraced in the word humanity. These interests include all that emanates from man and all that affects him. They include all the needs of man and all his powers; all his attainments and all his aspirations; all the means resorted to for a livelihood, and all the occupations of men; all arts, literature, science, government, religion, and, in fact, all that concerns men and interests them.

In this broad sense we speak of a passion for humanity—a passion not for something that merely pertains to humanity, but for humanity itself. When we speak of the passion for humanity, we mean an intense desire to promote the welfare of man. It is simply the interest in humanity raised to a fervent passion. It implies that there is an ardent love for

man as such; that there is genuine zeal for promoting the interests of mankind; and that there is enthusiasm in the effort to ameliorate the condition of the human family.

This passion is the death of all selfishness. It can exist only in large hearts and generous, comprehensive natures; hence it is a stranger to the heart whose affections twine only around self and home. It rises above the limited affections of immediate relationship, above all class and party interests, and even above national prejudice. Through these, above and beyond them, this passion recognizes all men as akin, and all their interests as inseparably interwoven. The heart in which this passion glows has realized its relation to humanity, and appreciates its kinship; it has been made conscious of the whole, of which it is but a part; and it feels that the whole is of greater moment than merely a part. Such a heart must do itself violence to limit its affections to itself, or to make itself the source and the end of all its activities. Recognizing its interests as those of humanity, it labours for humanity when for itself, and for itself when it labours for humanity.

This passion must not be confounded with a vague general sentiment respecting human welfare, which is idle and dreamy. Nor is it, like so much of what is called passion, blind. Not only has it a definite object in view, but it also works rationally for the attainment of that object. In this object the affections are absorbed, and this makes it a passion. It is not visionary, but intensely practical. For the intellect, the heart, and the will, it makes the brotherhood of man a reality. It has a definite ideal for the mind;

and this ideal shapes the affections and controls the conduct.

If this passion is healthy, it will not only seek to promote all the interests of humanity, but it will also seek to promote these interests in proportion to their worth. It will not despise even the least that pertains to man's welfare; but it will seek especially that which is best for man. Making humanity the standard of all earthly values, it estimates things not as having value in themselves, but according to their power to affect man. Man's body is not ignored; it is essential to him here, and its wellbeing is the condition for the healthy activity of the mind and the spirit. The improvement of its condition is, therefore, of great importance. But its value is not in itself, but in its relation to the mental and the moral. The mind, being higher than the body, is worthy of more culture. But the highest of all is spiritual culture. And if the passion for humanity is true and healthy, it will seek chiefly to promote that culture which is highest, though it will by no means neglect the other interests of man. In laying special stress on spiritual culture, it simply seeks the proper symmetry and proportion, and aims to cultivate man as man, not as a mere animal. When, therefore, this passion makes the spiritual welfare of humanity its highest aim, it simply acts in harmony with the truth.

Does Christianity cultivate this passion? There are those who regard Christianity as hostile to some of the interests of humanity, hence as one-sided and partial, and as either ignoring or else directly opposing some of the just claims of man. It has been charged that it does not recognize fully the claims of

man's physical nature; that while it cultivates the spirit of patience and submission, and all the gentler virtues, it does not cultivate the heroic virtues, and the spirit of manliness and independence; that by laying special stress on the life to come, it does not do full justice to this life, but depreciates it, and also this world; that by making faith the condition of salvation, it does not give reason its right place, and that, consequently, it does not promote science in all its departments; and that it does not cultivate the fine arts. These and other objections have been urged against Christianity, to show that it is not a friend to humanity, but is hostile to some of its interests, however much it may promote others.

As a rule, those who make these changes do not judge the Christian religion according to its own standard and real merit, but according to its representation in some individuals and in some churches. That in these religion is often very imperfect must be admitted. There are false systems of religion against which the above charges can justly be made; but genuine Christianity is not hostile to a single just claim of humanity. It seeks to remove from man whatever is hostile to his true manhood, and to develop that manhood in all its purity and to the utmost degree of perfection. It teaches that God not only created man, but also that he made him in his own image; if, therefore, it is hostile to any true element of man, it is hostile to the very work and image of God. It does, however, oppose that which depraved men crave, but not a single craving of the pure soul. And when men say that Christianity is hostile to humanity, they either do not understand the Christian

religion, or else they mistake the dross attached to man as the pure gold.

As a religious system, the Gospel addresses man as a religious being. It does not supersede reason, observation, and experience; but it communicates spiritual truth, which these cannot give. Hence its great aim is religious culture, and not physical, scientific, or political ends. But if its spirit is adopted, and if its principles are carried out, these ends will be promoted most efficiently and in the purest manner. Very naturally, the Gospel lays special stress on man's spiritual nature, and, above all, it seeks to purify and develop the spirit. The artist who paints the human form is specially careful about the face. That may cost him ten or twenty times as much labour as all the rest of the figure. But this does not argue that, while he appreciates the face, he depreciates the rest of the body. In the face the mind and soul, the distinctively human elements of man, are most strikingly seen. It is of prime importance, and deserves the extra time and labour devoted to it. Were as much attention paid to the feet, or hands, or drapery, it would be very evident that the artist did not understand his art. The law is, that everything is to receive attention proportionate to its importance.

This law is adopted by the Gospel. The spirit of man is of greatest value; therefore, it receives special attention. But this does not imply that the other parts of man are ignored. They are regarded as subordinate, because they *are* subordinate. The body is by no means despised or treated as of little importance. As already stated, Jesus heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and manifests a deep interest in man's

physical condition. Paul warns especially against the sin that is against one's own body, and declares that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. But besides the direct references in the New Testament to the care of the body, this care is implied all through its teachings. And all the spiritual blessings of the Gospel have an indirect influence on the body.

Nor does Christianity underestimate man's temporal welfare, or the temporal relations of men to one another. Clearly Jesus indicates, in the Sermon on the Mount, the relation of the temporal to the spiritual, at the same time showing that he is not indifferent whether men have the temporal or not. He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He also teaches his disciples a lesson of economy, in John 6: 12, when he says: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." He wants no earthly relation or inclination to interfere with spiritual relationship and claims, because the latter are higher than the former, and deserve the preference. But, at the same time, he teaches that it is sin to deprive parents of gifts under the pretext of serving God thereby. God is not to be robbed of his dues, but no more is government to be defrauded. Not only does Jesus teach the proper relation of man to God, but also of man to man. He teaches that love to man is as essential to Christian character as love to God. Indeed, we are taught to treat our fellow-men as we want God to treat us. We find in the Gospel the most perfect rules for all man's earthly relations. And so far from ignoring this life and this

world, the Gospel deals chiefly with man in this life, and makes his immortal life depend on it.

It need not be shown that Christianity gives all the faculties of the mind due honour; that it promotes all true science and art; and that it is a friend to all the real interests of humanity, recognizing all human claims, and seeking to promote, in their proper proportion, all human interests. It is truly and thoroughly humanitarian; and if understood in its length and breadth, it will be found to embrace in its interests and aims all that pertains to pure humanity.

It is, therefore, proper to say that Christianity cultivates a passion, not merely for religious dogmas, or for the person of Christ, or for religious institutions, or for heaven, but a passion for humanity, without omitting a single element or interest of man. And Christianity is the only system which does cultivate this passion. The systems called humanitarian, which oppose religion under the pretence of promoting the welfare of humanity, ignore the highest and the distinctively human element in man, his spiritual nature. Ignoring what is peculiarly and distinctively human, they do not cultivate a passion for humanity as such, but only for a part or parts of man. But these so-called humanitarian movements may serve a good purpose in calling the attention of Christian society to some of the neglected elements and interests of Christianity.

This passion has appeared in its purest and most perfect form in Jesus Christ. While he teaches and inspires it, he is also the perfect model of this passion for humanity. He came to seek and to save the lost manhood, and to give it, here and hereafter, the

highest development of which it is capable. To nothing purely human was he a stranger or an enemy. He esteemed likeness to God the true humanity; and his great aim was to restore this likeness. This image of God is the priceless gem; and all human affairs are esteemed in proportion as they promote it. Jesus restores harmony in human affairs, putting them into the right place and into the right proportions to one another, thus shaping chaos into symmetry. He takes the crown from under the feet and puts it on the head. In pursuing his humanizing efforts of restoring the lost humanity, he adapts his teachings to all the needs of man. Every age, every class, every condition, finds in the Gospel the truth adapted to its peculiar spiritual needs. And the high spiritual truth, like a sun, sheds its light on all beneath it. Christ's mission was divine; but it was as truly and as emphatically humanitarian.

To exhibit fully this passion for humanity in Christ would require a rehearsal of the whole Gospel. In word and deed, in life and death, as there recorded, the glow of this passion is seen. All humanity is its object, not merely an individual, a class, a nation, or an age. There is in Jesus an intense yearning for man; his deliverance and bliss are the all-absorbing thoughts; human obstacles and the devil's temptations cannot move him from his purpose to restore man; his life is a concentration of all his powers for the accomplishment of his humanitarian mission; and in his last passion and death we see the culmination of his passion for humanity. It was a passion that walked right into and through sacrifice and martyrdom to accomplish its purposes.

No one can deeply study the Gospel, imbibe its spirit, and make Christ his model, without at the same time having this passion. The apostles received it from their Master, because the same mind was in them that was in him. Paul's words and deeds are but the expression of this passion. And it has burned in all men who have been like unto Christ.

It is thus evident that we are not advocating anything that is new, though it is to a large degree lost and buried. In seeking to restore this passion, we are only trying to go back to Christ and his immediate followers.

The passion for humanity is so comprehensive that it is difficult to form a clear conception of what it really means and embraces. Vague notions are apt to prevail instead of clearly-defined objects. But it is still more difficult to form the passion itself, and to cultivate and exercise it. There are evidently few, very few, who love man as such, and who embrace humanity in their affection and pursuits. This requires an exaltation and enlarging of the heart which few attain. In nearly every case the affections and aims and pursuits are limited to self, to the family, to a small circle of friends, to a class, or a church, or a people, or to some particular interests. We speak of a passion for self, or for a class, or for particular objects; but who has ever even heard of a passion for humanity? One may well ask, is it to be found at all?

Individuals, societies, and churches have had, and still have, their passions. But frequently these have been selfish, or clannish, or sectarian. Impure passions are common. Men are easily absorbed by plea-

sure, or by a love of wealth or fame. In individuals, as well as nations, there is an earth hunger which amounts to a passion. Sometimes multitudes, and even ages, are urged on by strange but mighty impulses, as during the Crusades. Some speculation, some whim or caprice, may be made the basis of a passion swaying multitudes. Religion has had its passions for dogmas, for ascetic practices, for relics, and for pilgrimages. Nations, too, have had their passions, often wild and tumultuous, and plunging them into war. But amid all the reign of passions, good and evil, the passion for humanity has rarely been found.

But there are indications that a change is imminent. Already the Reformation broke loose from much of the scholastic speculation of the Middle Ages, a speculation whose human interest was often remote. But it was during the second half of last century that the so-called humanistic tendencies were made specially prominent. In England, France, and Germany, men arose who made human needs and human interests a special study. In England this study was largely under the influence of deism; in Germany, of rationalism; in France, of materialism. Its results were, therefore, largely hostile to religion. The attention was directed chiefly to man's earthly interests; and not unfrequently were his spiritual interests entirely ignored. The rights of man became a favourite theme of discussion. The political thought of Europe underwent a revolution. Tyrants lost their grip. As a result of the revolution in sentiment, we have American Independence and the French Revolution. Political economy is born, and henceforth receives a large share of attention. The most prominent literary

characters promote the humanitarian movement. New systems of education are established, especially in Germany, whose immediate aim is to better man's earthly condition. The poets celebrate man and human affairs; and, in fact, all literature becomes humanitarian as never before. In the new interest excited in humanity, many of the former disputes were buried, and many of the former problems and speculations were thrust aside.

There was much in this tendency that was partial and erroneous. In their hot zeal for human interests many went too far. They wanted to usher in a new era which had no historical basis in the development of the past. They looked on State religions as instruments used to fetter men, and they turned their backs on religion itself. It is not strange that when men became conscious of themselves and their rights, they should jump to the extreme, and mistake liberty as freedom from all external restraint, whether on the part of government or of God. But partial as the movement was, it swept everything before it, and has determined the character of the literature of the day. And it is safe to say that in Europe and America the gross tyranny of serfdom and the slavery of past ages, have been made impossible.

Religion has not been outside of this movement, but in it; it has helped to form the current, and it has been borne along by that current. We need not stop to indicate the great philanthropic and missionary enterprises of the Church within a century. Not that these are altogether new; but they are certainly more general, and have a wider range than ever before. Without sacrificing its spirituality, the

Church has become more humanitarian in the best sense.

In order to fulfil its mission, the Church must keep abreast of the age. Outside of the Church man is the focus of thought and pursuit. Infidelity professes to be the champion of the welfare of mankind. But if infidelity has any passion for man, it is necessarily partial, since it neglects that which is highest in man, his religious nature. Nor can the Church meet the needs of the age if it attends only to a part of human interests. It must have regard to the whole man and to all his interests. It must have regard to the individual and to society, and to the whole world; it must regard man as spiritual, intellectual, and physical; as of God, and yet of earth; as the creature of the day, and yet immortal. In one word, the passion for humanity must be healthy.

Christ repeatedly declares that the Father's glory is his aim. This, however, does not conflict with his passion for humanity. It is by means of this very passion, namely, by saving man, that he promotes the Father's glory. The eminent Tholuck said: "I have but one passion; and that is he, he only." He meant Christ. And yet it was a passion which included man; and with a real passion Tholuck sought to bring men to Christ; and thousands of young men have been led, through his influence, nearer Christ. This passion, therefore, does not interfere with the glory of God as the great aim of life; it is the very means of promoting this glory.

Looking at man in his grovelling state and in his selfish pursuits; looking at the false religions which are so prevalent; looking at the narrowness, bigotry,

worldliness, and apathy of so many in the Church; looking at the general paralysis of faith, which makes enthusiasm so difficult and rare; looking on the many professors who have slain the spirit of sacrifice; looking at the flood of infidelity, sensuality, and crime, threatening to deluge us with a modern heathenism; is there any hope that this pure, noble, large, human and yet divine passion for humanity can be made prevalent among believers? It looks like a mere ideal, the realization of which seems hardly possible. Yet, we believe that there are some who have the heroism of faith, and the devotion of love, to make this passion the inspiration of their lives. These few chosen ones may communicate it to others, so that other hearts may also glow for human welfare. But however difficult or rare this passion may be, it is the great need of the day. And when Christian Sociology has done its greatest work, it will have produced and developed the passion for humanity.

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